THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED

OCT.
10¢
NO. 7

HEED THIS WARNING!

BEWARE!

IF YOU ARE LIKE

THE MAN WHO SAW TOO MUCH!

THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED

WEIRD!

EERIE!

SPINE-TINGLING!

ON SALE AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND 10¢

The MAN who SAW too MUCH

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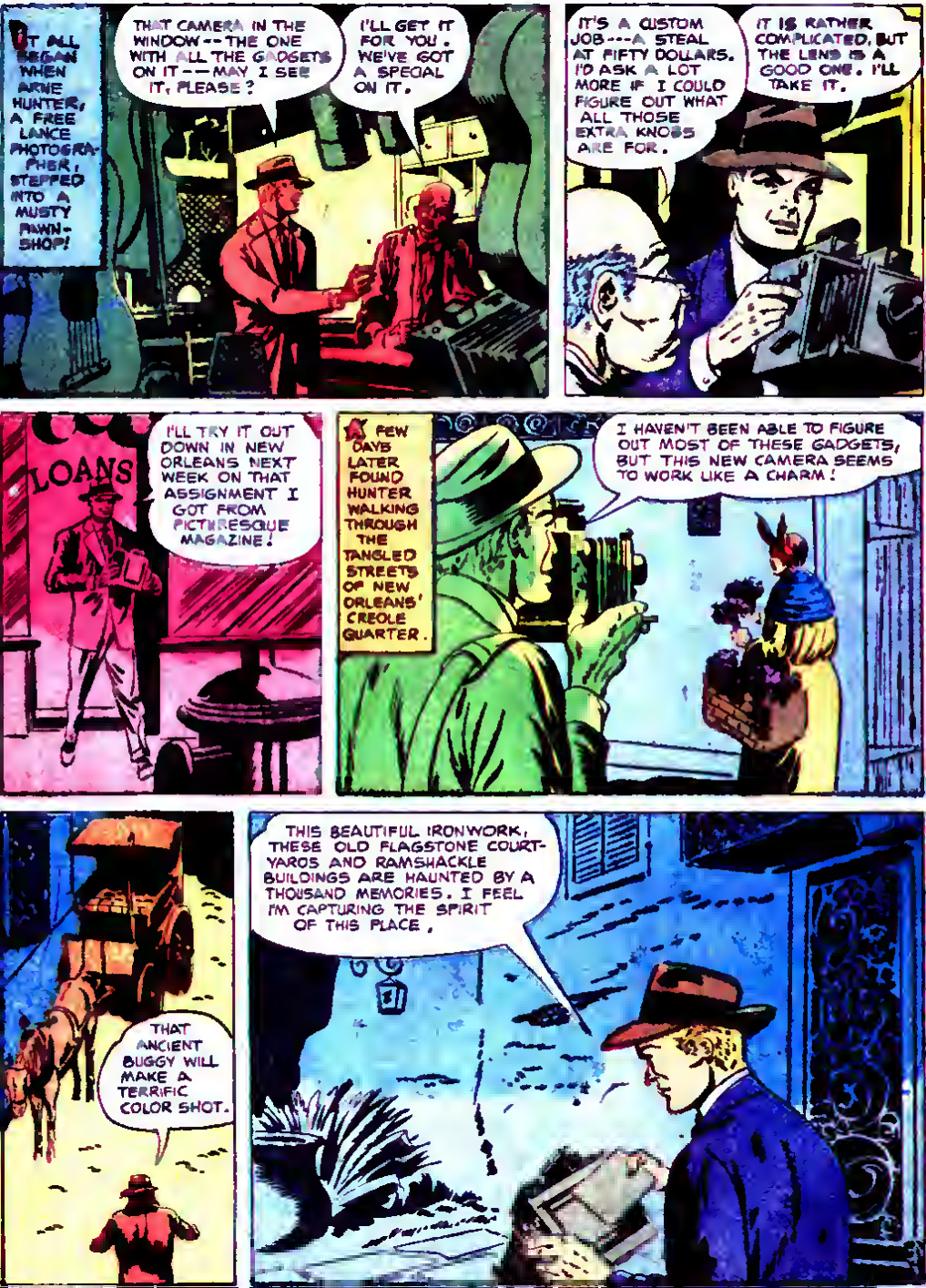
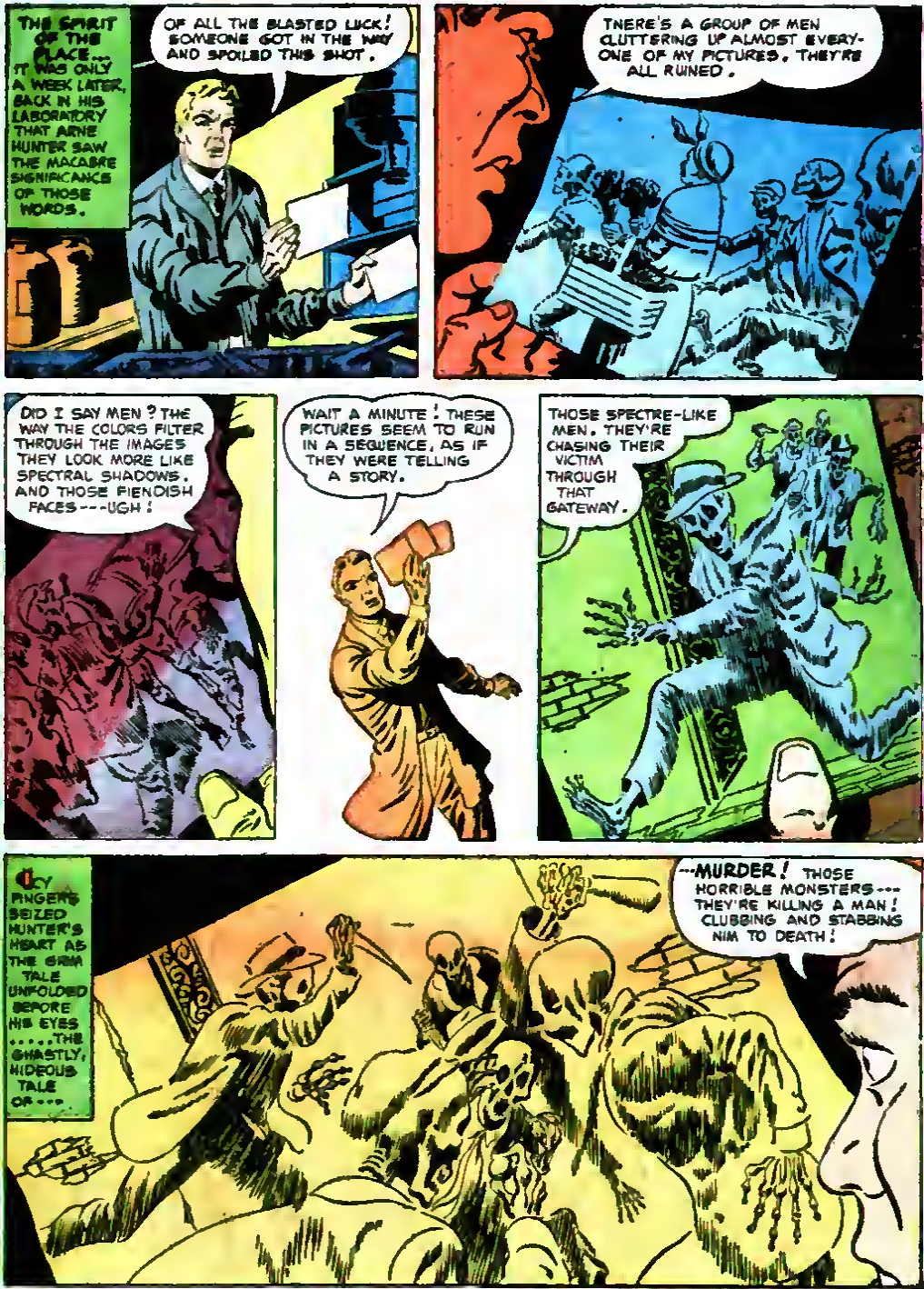
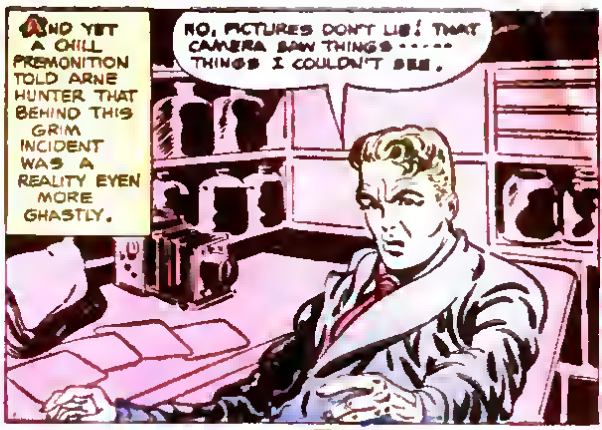
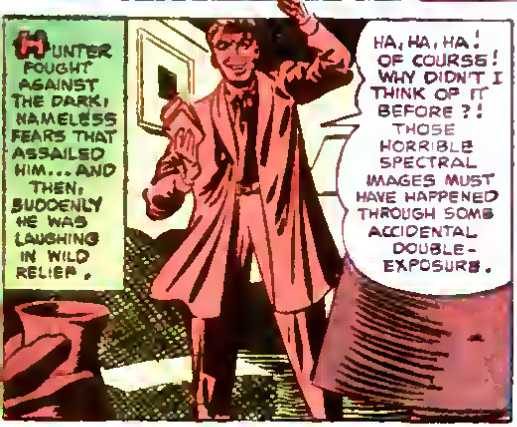
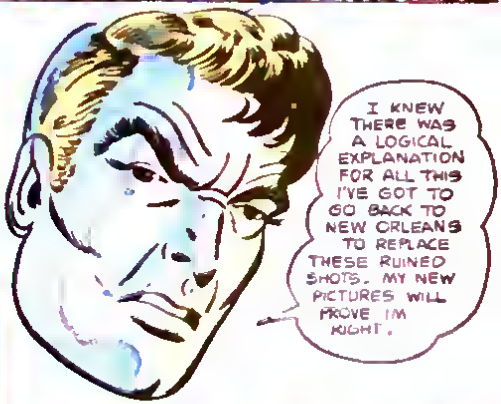

IT ALL BEGAN WHEN ARNE HUNTER, A FREE LANCE PHOTOGRAPHER, STEPPED INTO A MUSTY PAWN-SHOP!
THAT CAMERA IN THE WINDOW -- THE ONE WITH ALL THE GADGETS ON IT -- MAY I SEE IT, PLEASE?
I'LL GET IT FOR YOU. WE'VE GOT A SPECIAL ON IT.
IT'S A CUSTOM JOB---A STEAL AT FIFTY DOLLARS. I'D ASK A LOT MORE IF I COULD FIGURE OUT WHAT ALL THOSE EXTRA KNOBS ARE FOR.
IT IS RATHER COMPLICATED, BUT THE LENS IS A GOOD ONE. I'LL TAKE IT.
LOANS
I'LL TRY IT OUT DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS NEXT WEEK ON THAT ASSIGNMENT I GOT FROM PICTURESQUE MAGAZINE!
A FEW DAYS LATER FOUND HUNTER WALKING THROUGH THE TANGLED STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS' CREOLE QUARTER.
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE OUT MOST OF THESE GADGETS, BUT THIS NEW CAMERA SEEMS TO WORK LIKE A CHARM!
THAT ANCIENT BUGGY WILL MAKE A TERRIFIC COLOR SHOT.
THIS BEAUTIFUL IRONWORK, THESE OLD FLAGSTONE COURTYARDS AND RAMSHACKLE BUILDINGS ARE HAUNTED BY A THOUSAND MEMORIES. I FEEL I'M CAPTURING THE SPIRIT OF THIS PLACE.

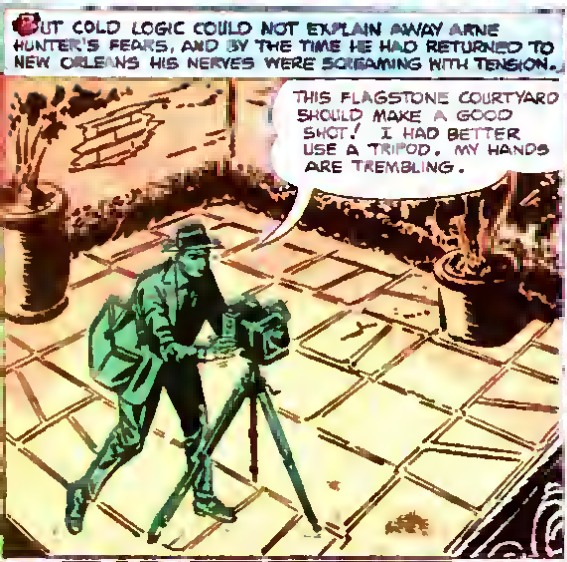

THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE...
IT WAS ONLY A WEEK LATER, BACK IN HIS LABORATORY THAT ARNE HUNTER SAW THE MACABRE SIGNIFICANCE OF THOSE WORDS.
OF ALL THE BLASTED LUCK! SOMEONE GOT IN THE WAY AND SPOILED THIS SHOT.
THERE'S A GROUP OF MEN CLUTTERING UP ALMOST EVERY-ONE OF MY PICTURES. THEY'RE ALL RUINED.
DID I SAY MEN? THE WAY THE COLORS FILTER THROUGH THE IMAGES THEY LOOK MORE LIKE SPECTRAL SHADOWS. AND THOSE FIENDISH FACES---UGH!
WAIT A MINUTE! THESE PICTURES SEEM TO RUN IN A SEQUENCE, AS IF THEY WERE TELLING A STORY.
THOSE SPECTRE-LIKE MEN. THEY'RE CHASING THEIR VICTIM THROUGH THAT GATEWAY.
CY FINGERS SEIZED HUNTER'S HEART AS THE GRIM TALE UNFOLDED BEFORE HIS EYES.....THE GHASTLY, HIDEOUS TALE OF---
---MURDER! THOSE HORRIBLE MONSTERS--- THEY'RE KILLING A MAN! CLUBBING AND STABBING HIM TO DEATH!

BUT HOW COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED BEFORE MY VERY EYES WITHOUT MY SEEING IT ? IT'S ALL SOME CRAZY MISTAKE! IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED.

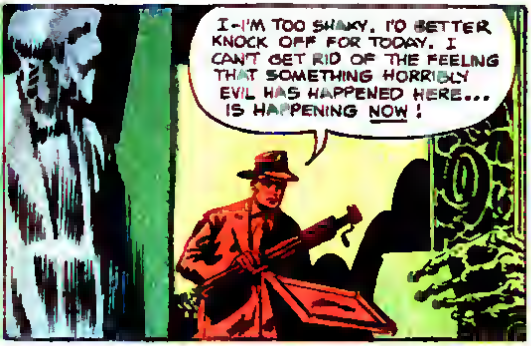

AND YET A CHILL PREMONITION TOLD ARNE HUNTER THAT BEHIND THIS GRIM INCIDENT WAS A REALITY EVEN MORE GHASTLY.
NO, PICTURES DON'T LIE! THAT CAMERA SAW THINGS..... THINGS I COULDN'T SEE.

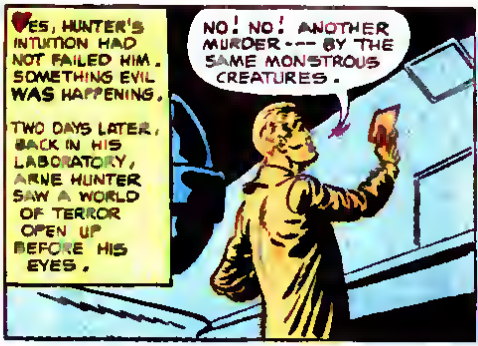

HUNTER FOUGHT AGAINST THE DARK, NAMELESS FEARS THAT ASSAILED HIM... AND THEN, SUDDENLY HE WAS LAUGHING IN WILD RELIEF.
HA, HA, HA! OF COURSE! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT BEFORE?! THOSE HORRIBLE SPECTRAL IMAGES MUST HAVE HAPPENED THROUGH SOME ACCIDENTAL DOUBLE-EXPOSURE.


I KNEW THERE WAS A LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR ALL THIS I'VE GOT TO GO BACK TO NEW ORLEANS TO REPLACE THESE RUINED SHOTS. MY NEW PICTURES WILL PROVE I'M RIGHT.


BUT COLD LOGIC COULD NOT EXPLAIN AWAY ARNE HUNTER'S FEARS, AND BY THE TIME HE HAD RETURNED TO NEW ORLEANS HIS NERVES WERE SCREAMING WITH TENSION.
THIS FLAGSTONE COURTYARD SHOULD MAKE A GOOD SHOT! I HAD BETTER USE A TRIPOD. MY HANDS ARE TREMBLING.

THAT GATEWAY. THAT'S JUST WHERE THOSE HIDEOUS FIENDS WERE CHASING THEIR VICTIM.

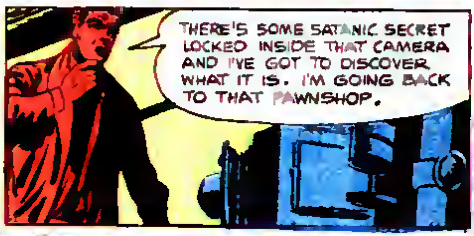

I--I'M TOO SHAKY. I'D BETTER KNOCK OFF FOR TODAY. I CAN'T GET RID OF THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING HORRIBLY EVIL HAS HAPPENED HERE... IS HAPPENING NOW!

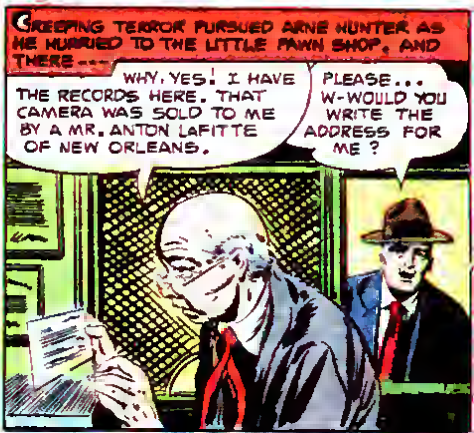

YES, HUNTER'S INTUITION HAD NOT FAILED HIM. SOMETHING EVIL WAS HAPPENING.
TWO DAYS LATER, BACK IN HIS LABORATORY, ARNE HUNTER SAW A WORLD OF TERROR OPEN UP BEFORE HIS EYES.
NO! NO! ANOTHER MURDER--- BY THE SAME MONSTROUS CREATURES.

THIS SECOND VICTIM---- HE HAS A CAMERA JUST LIKE MINE!

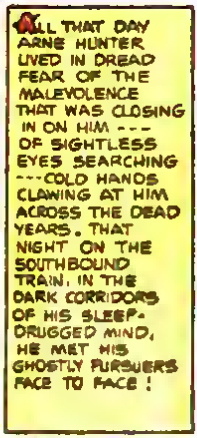
AND THEN, AS ARNE STARED AT THE REMAINING PICTURES OF THE SERIES, HIS HEART SHRIVELED IN MORTAL FEAR!
ONE OF THOSE MURDERERS IS POINTING RIGHT AT ME. AS IF HE SAW ME SNAPPING THE PICTURE.

THOSE DAGGERS, THOSE BESTIAL LEERS--- AS IF THEY WISHED TO DESTROY ME AS THEY DID THEIR OTHER VICTIMS.


THERE'S SOME SATANIC SECRET LOCKED INSIDE THAT CAMERA AND I'VE GOT TO DISCOVER WHAT IT IS. I'M GOING BACK TO THAT PAWNSHOP.


CREEPING TERROR PURSUED ARNE HUNTER AS HE HURRIED TO THE LITTLE PAWN SHOP, AND THERE---
WHY, YES! I HAVE THE RECORDS HERE. THAT CAMERA WAS SOLD TO ME BY A MR. ANTON LAFITTE OF NEW ORLEANS.
PLEASE... W-WOULD YOU WRITE THE ADDRESS FOR ME?

NEW ORLEANS! IT'S TOO MUCH FOR MERE COINCIDENCE. I'VE GOT TO FIND THIS ANTON LAFITTE AND MAKE HIM EXPLAIN BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
LOANS


ALL THAT DAY ARNE HUNTER LIVED IN DREAD FEAR OF THE MALEVOLENCE THAT WAS CLOSING IN ON HIM --- OF SIGHTLESS EYES SEARCHING ---COLD HANDS CLAWING AT HIM ACROSS THE DEAD YEARS. THAT NIGHT ON THE SOUTHBOUND TRAIN, IN THE DARK CORRIDORS OF HIS SLEEP-DRUGGED MIND, HE MET HIS GHOSTLY PURSUERS FACE TO FACE!

HERE HE IS---THE ONE WHO SPIED ON US! HE HAS TRIED TO UNCOVER THE SECRETS OF THE DEAD.

SLAY HIM! DESTROY HIM AS WE DID THE OTHERS!
NO! NO!

KILL! KILL!
AAAIIEEEE!

HUH!? SOMETHING'S WRONG IN THAT LOWER BERTH.

WHAT'S WRONG, MAN? WHAT HAPPENED?
IT'S THEM! THEY'RE AFTER ME. DON'T LET THEM GET ME.

EASY, MR. HUNTER. YOU'RE ON THE NEW ORLEANS SPECIAL. I GUESS YOU JUST HAD A BAD DREAM.
A DREAM! THANK HEAVEN! THEN IT WASN'T REAL!

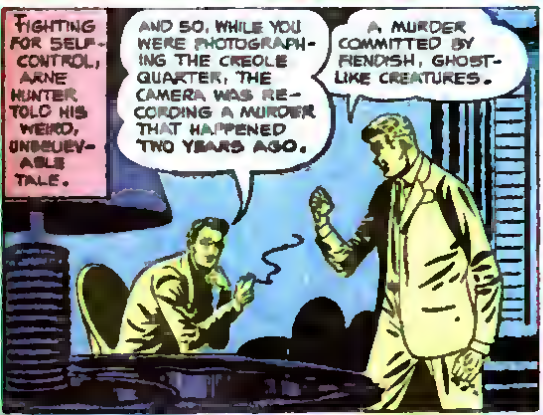
DID YOU HEAR THAT SHRIEK? HE SOUNDED LIKE A MADMAN!
MAYBE THEY'RE RIGHT. PERHAPS I AM GOING INSANE. NIGHTMARES LIKE THAT COULD ONLY COME TO A MADMAN!

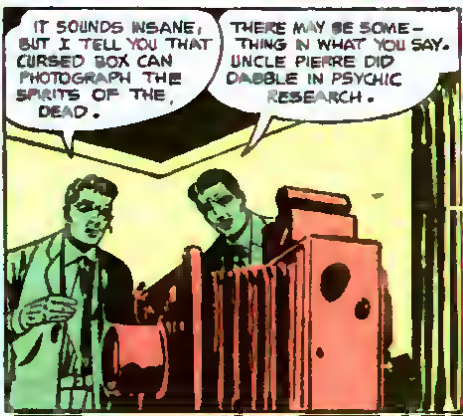
AND YET SOMEHOW IT WAS MORE THAN A NIGHTMARE. THERE WAS A HORRIBLE REALITY BEHIND THAT DREAM. I KNOW IT! I KNOW IT...!

THE NEXT DAY FOUND ARNE IN NEW ORLEANS, AT THE HOME OF ANTON LAFITTE.
YES, I DID PAWN THAT CAMERA ONE DAY WHEN I WAS TEMPORARILY SHORT OF FUNDS ON A VISIT UP NORTH. IT BELONGED TO MY UNCLE PIERRE. IT WAS ALL HE LEFT ME WHEN HE WAS KILLED.
KILLED?

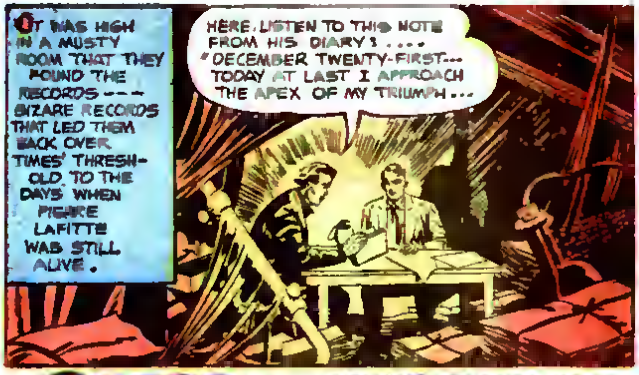
HE WAS FOUND MURDERED ONE NIGHT IN THE CREOLE QUARTER---WITH THE CAMERA IN HIS HAND. THE CASE WAS NEVER SOLVED.
THE MAN WITH THE CAMERA IN HIS HAND! THE MAN IN MY PICTURES!

ALMOST HYSTERICALLY ARNE DREW FORTH HIS PHOTOGRAPHS AND--
MR. LAFITTE! I WANT YOU TO LOOK AT THESE PICTURES.
WHY----IT'S UNCLE PIERRE! THOSE FIENDS ARE ATTACKING HIM!


FIGHTING FOR SELF-CONTROL, ARNE HUNTER TOLD HIS WEIRD, UNBELIEVABLE TALE.
AND SO, WHILE YOU WERE PHOTOGRAPHING THE CREOLE QUARTER, THE CAMERA WAS RECORDING A MURDER THAT HAPPENED TWO YEARS AGO.
A MURDER COMMITTED BY FIENDISH, GHOST-LIKE CREATURES.


IT SOUNDS INSANE, BUT I TELL YOU THAT CURSED BOX CAN PHOTOGRAPH THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.
THERE MAY BE SOMETHING IN WHAT YOU SAY. UNCLE PIERRE DID DABBLE IN PSYCHIC RESEARCH.

COME, WE WILL EXAMINE MY UNCLE'S ROOM. HE LEFT A PILE OF NOTES AND DIARIES AT HIS DESK. PERHAPS THERE WE WILL FIND SOME CLUE.


IT WAS HIGH IN A MUSTY ROOM THAT THEY FOUND THE RECORDS --- BIZARE RECORDS THAT LED THEM BACK OVER TIMES' THRESHOLD TO THE DAYS WHEN PIGNRE LAFITTE WAS STILL ALIVE.
HERE, LISTEN TO THIS NOTE FROM HIS DIARY! .... "DECEMBER TWENTY-FIRST... TODAY AT LAST I APPROACH THE APEX OF MY TRIUMPH...

It was simple. After all, a camera is built to capture the images of people as they live - of events as they occur.

But now, by adding a few simple refracting mirrors to the optical system, I have at last perfected a camera which can photograph events of the past and people long since dead and forgotten.

Now, for the first time I go out to draw aside the shroud of the past and capture the ghostly faces and memories of the old Creole Quarter.

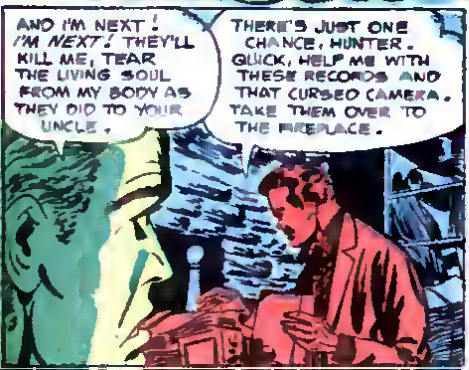
I WAS RIGHT! THIS CAMERA WAS DESIGNED TO TAKE THE PICTURES OF GHOSTS!
GOOD HEAVENS! LISTEN TO THIS NEXT ENTRY.

May heaven protect me from the evil forces I have released... Last night I tested my camera at the site of the thirty-year-old unsolved murder of Joseph Mornay---

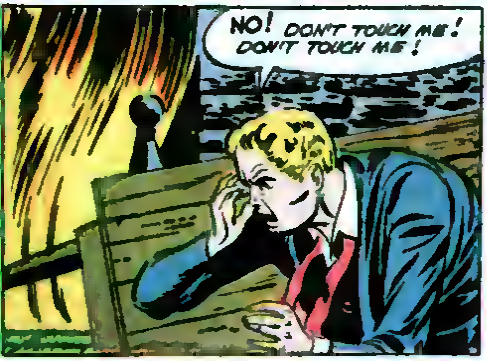
And tonight, when I developed the pictures, I had the photographs of the long-dead murderers caught red-handed in the midst of their crime.

But one of my proofs shows that I was seen by the ghostly killers as I spied upon them.

And now I await the dread doom that I know must come. I have opened a forbidden door and seen that which mortal eyes must never see. And I know the dead will not rest until they are revenged.

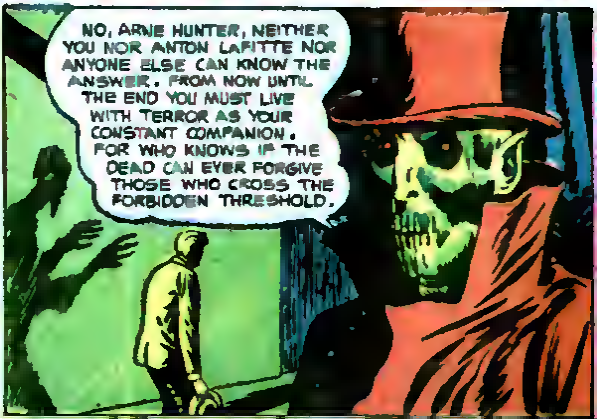


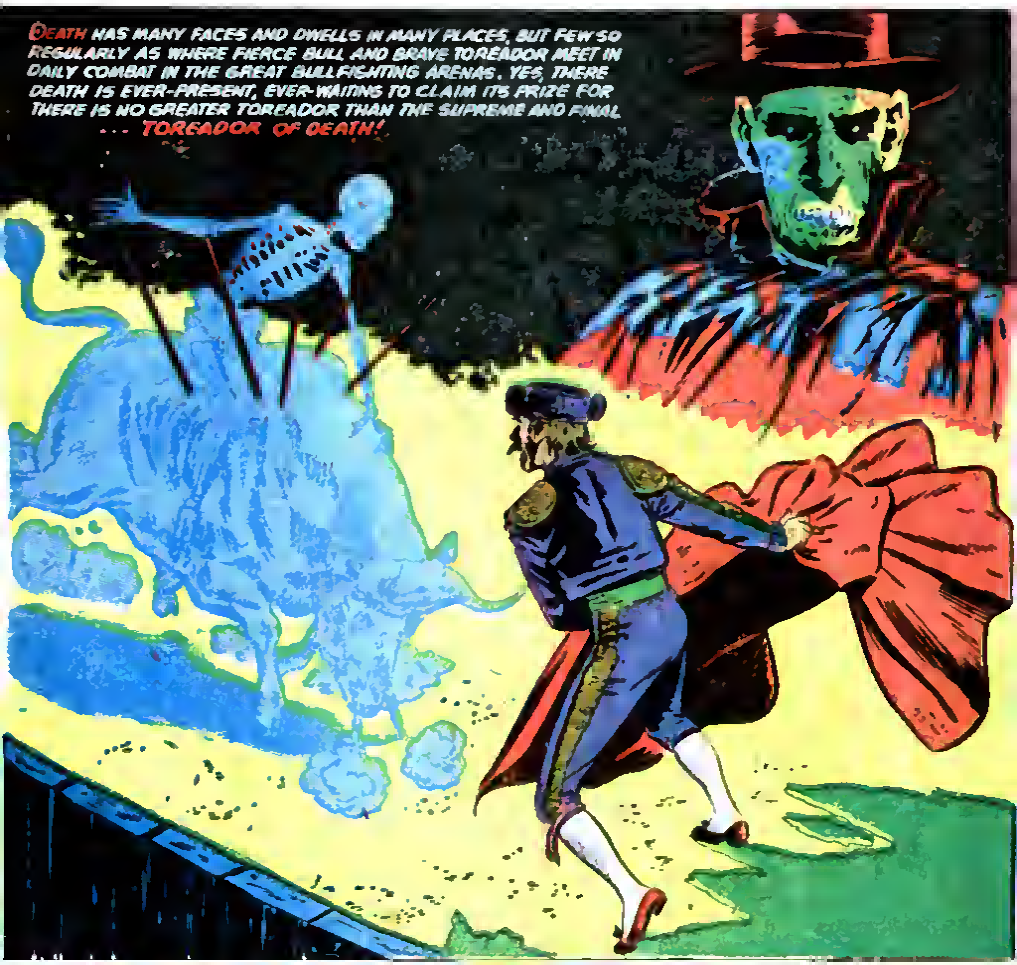
AND AS THE FIRE TOOK HOLD, THE FLAMES SHOT UPWARD WITH A SINISTER HISSING ROAR!
AAAIIIEE! IT'S THEM!

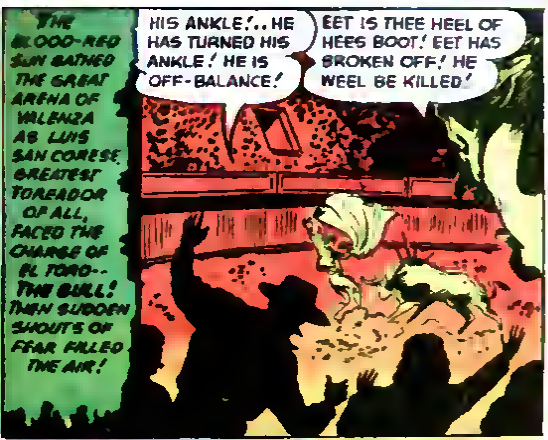

NO! DON'T TOUCH ME! DON'T TOUCH ME!

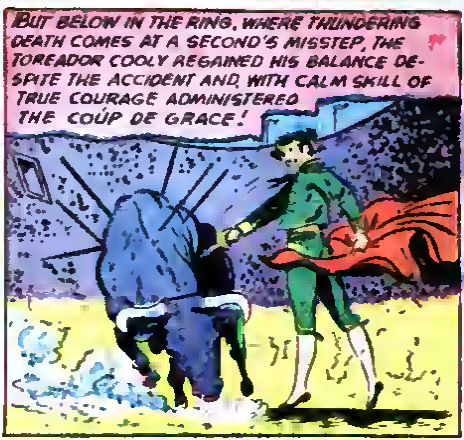
LAFITTE---YOU SAW THEM?
IT WAS HORRIBLE! HORRIBLE!

DO YOU THINK IT WAS ENOUGH FOR THEM? DO YOU THINK THEY ARE SATISFIED? TELL ME, MAN! TELL ME!
I DON'T KNOW, HUNTER, I DON'T KNOW...


NO, ARNE HUNTER, NEITHER YOU NOR ANTON LAFITTE NOR ANYONE ELSE CAN KNOW THE ANSWER. FROM NOW UNTIL THE END YOU MUST LIVE WITH TERROR AS YOUR CONSTANT COMPANION. FOR WHO KNOWS IF THE DEAD CAN EVER FORGIVE THOSE WHO CROSS THE FORBIDDEN THRESHOLD.


DEATH HAS MANY FACES AND DWELLS IN MANY PLACES, BUT FEW SO REGULARLY AS WHERE FIERCE BULL AND BRAVE TOREADOR MEET IN DAILY COMBAT IN THE GREAT BULLFIGHTING ARENAS. YES, THERE DEATH IS EVER-PRESENT, EVER-WAITING TO CLAIM ITS PRIZE FOR THERE IS NO GREATER TOREADOR THAN THE SUPREME AND FINAL ... TORCADOR OF DEATH!

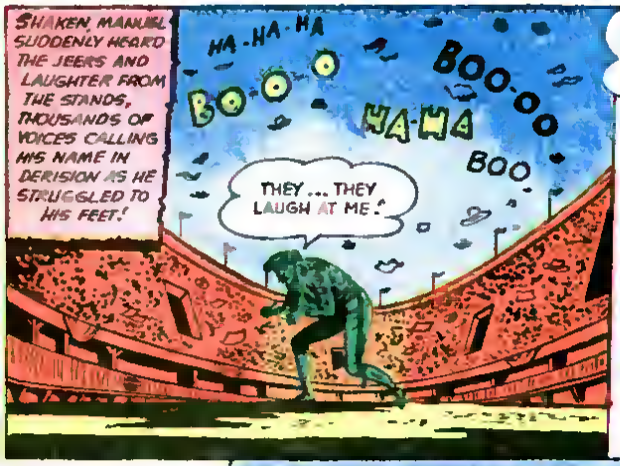

THE BLOOD-RED SUN BATHED THE GREAT ARENA OF VALENZA AS LUIS SAN CORESE, GREATEST TOREADOR OF ALL, FACED THE CHARGE OF EL TORO-- THE BULL! THEN SUDDEN SHOUTS OF FEAR FILLED THE AIR!
HIS ANKLE!.. HE HAS TURNED HIS ANKLE! HE IS OFF-BALANCE!
EET IS THEE HEEL OF HEES BOOT! EET HAS BROKEN OFF! HE WEEL BE KILLED!


BUT BELOW IN THE RING, WHERE THUNDERING DEATH COMES AT A SECOND'S MISSTEP, THE TOREADOR COOLY REGAINED HIS BALANCE DESPITE THE ACCIDENT AND, WITH CALM SKILL OF TRUE COURAGE ADMINISTERED THE COUP DE GRACE!

AND NOW THE ARENA RANG WITH CHEERS. 'BRAVO!' THEY ECHOED. 'EXCELLENTE!' 'MAGNIFICO!' YES, PLAUDITS FIT FOR ONLY THE GREAT. BUT AT THE SIDE OF THE ARENA, ANOTHER WATCHED, A YOUNG TOREADOR.
FAILED AGAIN.' AND I WAS SO CERTAIN THAT WEAKENING THE BOOT HEEL WOULD THROW HIM OFF-BALANCE.' EL TORO WOULD DO THE REST.'
NOW LUIS WILL BE A STILL GREATER HERO WHILE I, MANUEL SABATA, AM TOSSED THE CRUMBS OF APPLAUSE ONLY.' I MUST FIND ANOTHER WAY TO GET RID OF HIM.' I MUST.'
MANUEL SABATA'S THOUGHTS WERE SUDDENLY INTERRUPTED AS HE HEARD HIS NAME BEING CALLED. ONE OF THE PICADORS BECKONED IMPERATIVELY TO HIM. HE MOVED FORWARD TO THE OPEN ARENA.'
MANUEL!.. MANUEL.' YOU ARE ON NEXT.' EVERYTHING IS READY.' THE PEOPLE WAIT.' COME...
EH...? YES, YES... I COME.'
ORDER THE BULL RELEASED.' WE HAVE DELAYED ENOUGH.'
PIZA
MANUEL HID A SNEER AT THE POLITE APPLAUSE OF THE AFICIONADOS AND THEN TURNED AWAY. BUT THE SNEER BECAME A MASK OF HORROR AS HE SAW THE BULL CHARGING, ALMOST UPON HIM. IT WAS A CREATURE TO MAKE THE BLOOD RUN COLD.'
DIABLE!

MANUEL STABBED FURIOUSLY AT THE THING OF HORROR, PUTTING ALL HIS STRENGTH BEHIND THE THRUST. BUT THE STRANGE APPARITION SUDDENLY EVAPORATED AND HE FELT HIMSELF FALL FORWARD... FORWARD...
WHA...!?

W-WHAT HAPPENED? I-I DID NOT MISS HIM! I COULDN'T HAVE!

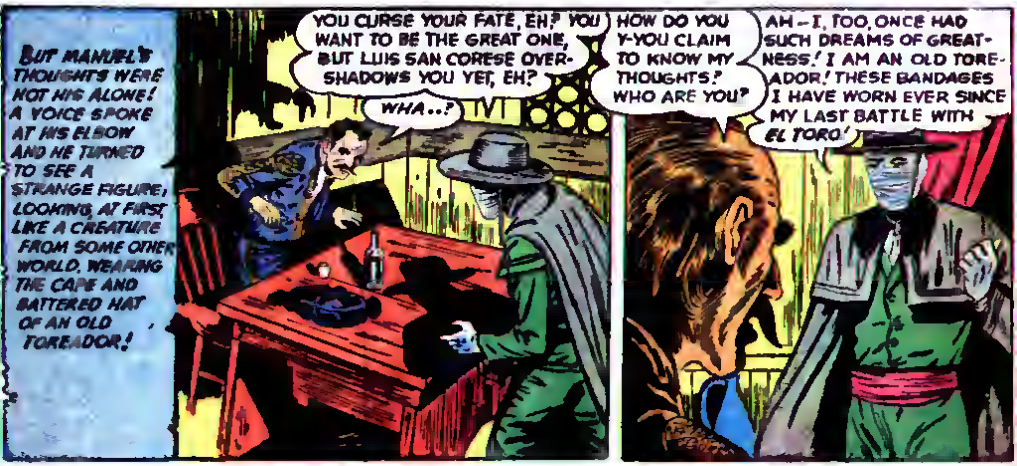

SHAKEN, MANUEL SUDDENLY HEARD THE JEERS AND LAUGHTER FROM THE STANDS, THOUSANDS OF VOICES CALLING HIS NAME IN DERISION AS HE STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET!
HA-HA-HA
BOO-O
BOO-OO
HA-HA
BOO
THEY... THEY LAUGH AT ME!

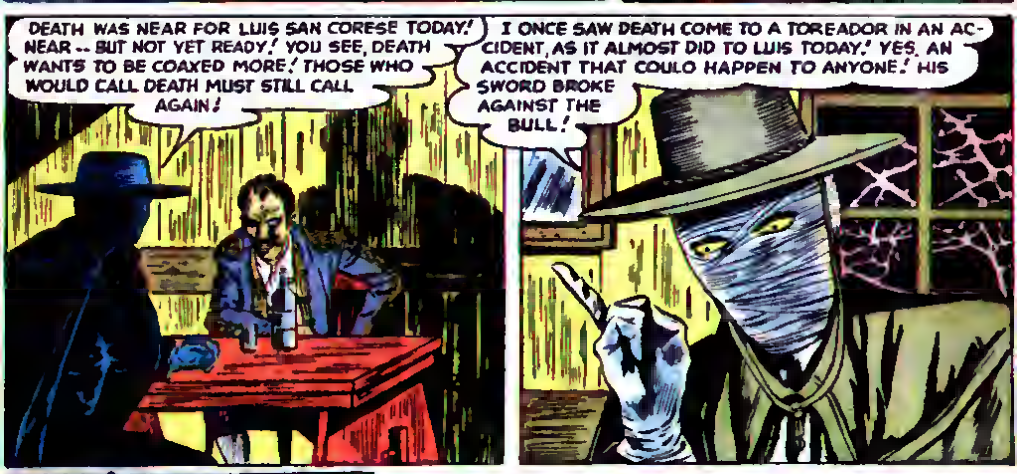
MANUEL, WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WERE DOING? WE HAVE NOT EVEN RELEASED THE BULL YET!
YOU-YOU HAVE NOT RELEASED HIM? I...IT WAS NOTHING! I GREW DIZZY, THAT'S ALL!

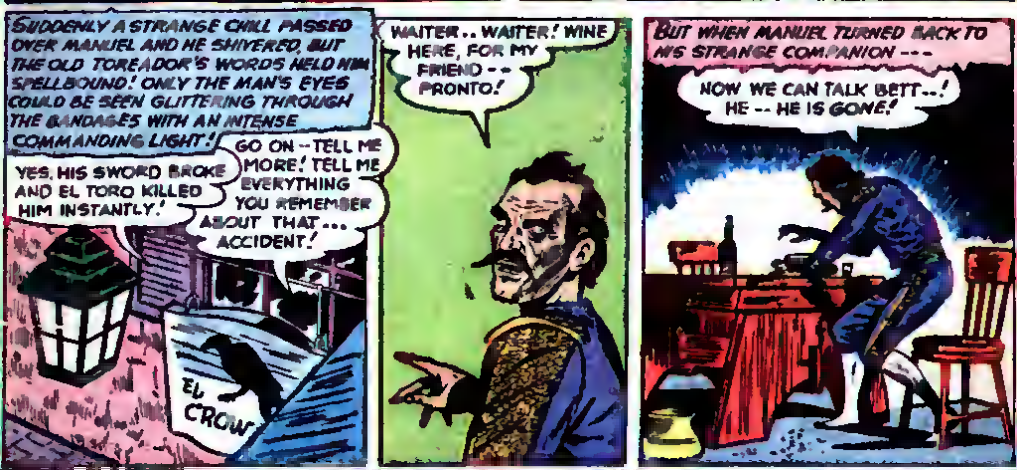
I-I AM ILL! I CANNOT FIGHT THE BULL TODAY! I-I GO NOW! I AM ILL!

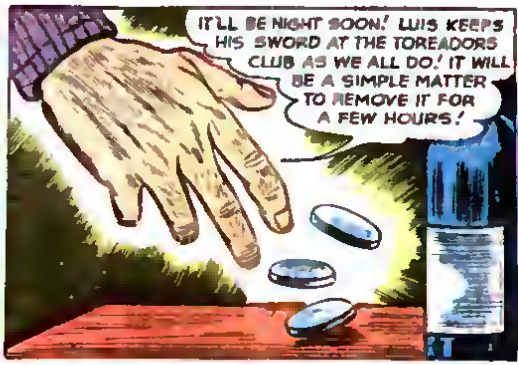
WITH THE JEERS RINGING IN HIS EARS, MANUEL SABATA SLIPPED OUT THE BACK DOOR OF THE ARENA - MINUTES LATER HE BROODED ANGRILY IN A CORNER OF A TAVERN, HIS SOUL AFLAME WITH THE FIRES OF EVIL AND WRATH!
A BAD DAY IT HAS BEEN! WITH MY OWN HANDS I FIXED THE HEEL OF THE BOOT TO BREAK! I CALLED ON DEATH TO STRIKE LUIS SAN CORESE, AND AGAIN DEATH REFUSED ME!

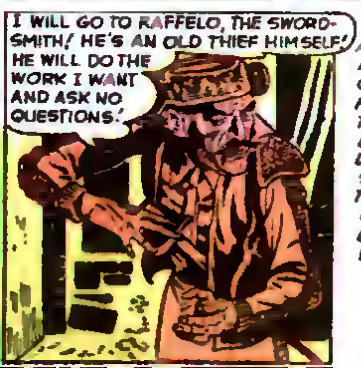
WHY?.. WHY? AND THE VISION.. THAT APPARITION I SAW IN THE RING! WHAT OF THAT? DEATH TAUNTS ME... MOCKS MY PLANS!


BUT MANUEL'S THOUGHTS WERE NOT HIS ALONE! A VOICE SPOKE AT HIS ELBOW AND HE TURNED TO SEE A STRANGE FIGURE, LOOKING, AT FIRST, LIKE A CREATURE FROM SOME OTHER WORLD, WEARING THE CAPE AND BATTERED HAT OF AN OLD TOREADOR!
YOU CURSE YOUR FATE, EH? YOU WANT TO BE THE GREAT ONE, BUT LUIS SAN CORESE OVER-SHADOWS YOU YET, EH?
WHA..?
HOW DO YOU Y-YOU CLAIM TO KNOW MY THOUGHTS! WHO ARE YOU?
AH – I, TOO, ONCE HAD SUCH DREAMS OF GREATNESS! I AM AN OLD TOREADOR! THESE BANDAGES I HAVE WORN EVER SINCE MY LAST BATTLE WITH EL TORO!

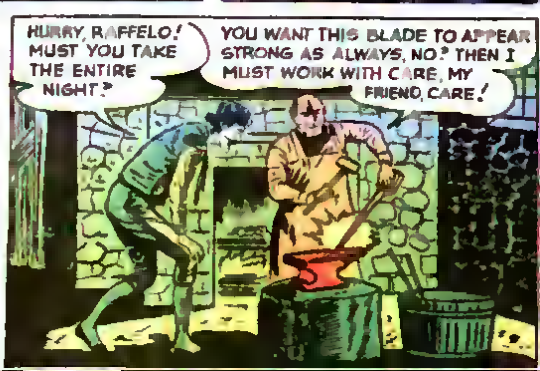

DEATH WAS NEAR FOR LUIS SAN CORESE TODAY! NEAR -- BUT NOT YET READY! YOU SEE, DEATH WANTS TO BE COAXED MORE! THOSE WHO WOULD CALL DEATH MUST STILL CALL AGAIN!
I ONCE SAW DEATH COME TO A TOREADOR IN AN ACCIDENT, AS IT ALMOST DID TO LUIS TODAY! YES, AN ACCIDENT THAT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE! HIS SWORD BROKE AGAINST THE BULL!


SUDDENLY A STRANGE CHILL PASSED OVER MANUEL AND HE SHIVERED, BUT THE OLD TOREADOR'S WORDS HELD HIM SPELLBOUND! ONLY THE MAN'S EYES COULD BE SEEN GLITTERING THROUGH THE BANDAGES WITH AN INTENSE COMMANDING LIGHT!
YES, HIS SWORD BROKE AND EL TORO KILLED HIM INSTANTLY!
GO ON -- TELL ME MORE! TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THAT... ACCIDENT!
EL CROW
WAITER.. WAITER! WINE HERE, FOR MY FRIEND -- PRONTO!
BUT WHEN MANUEL TURNED BACK TO HIS STRANGE COMPANION ---
NOW WE CAN TALK BETT..! HE -- HE IS GONE!

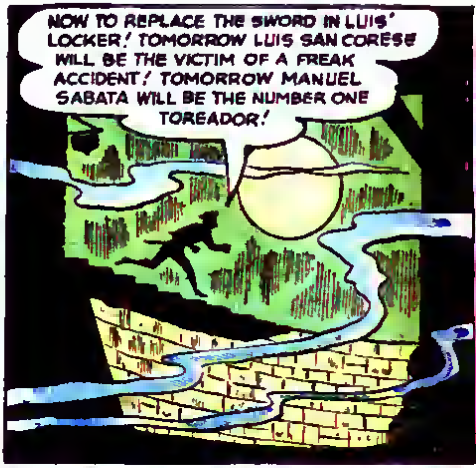




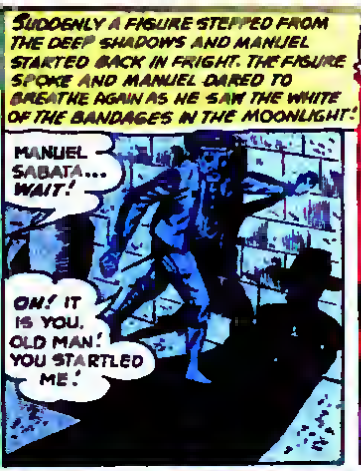
AND SOON AFTER, THE FIRELIGHT OF A FORGE FLICKERED TO LIGHT A DARK AND DANK LITTLE SHOP WITH THE GLARE OF THE DEVIL'S OWN WORKSHOP!

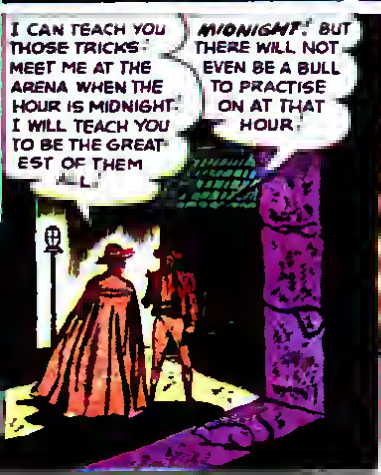


MOMENTS LATER, THE SWORD HIDDEN BENEATH HIS COAT, MANUEL HURRIED INTO THE NIGHT STREETS! ALREADY THE SHUTTERS OF THE HOUSES WERE DRAWN AND THE MOON ROSE HIGH!

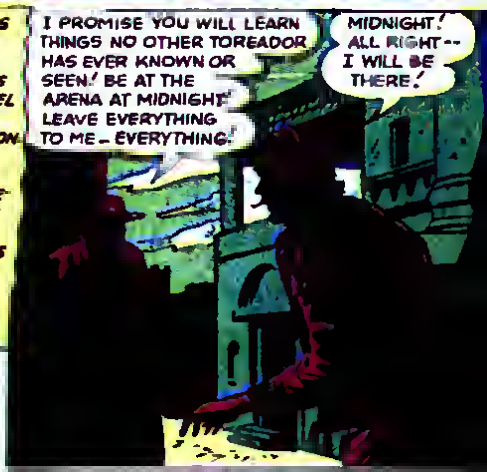


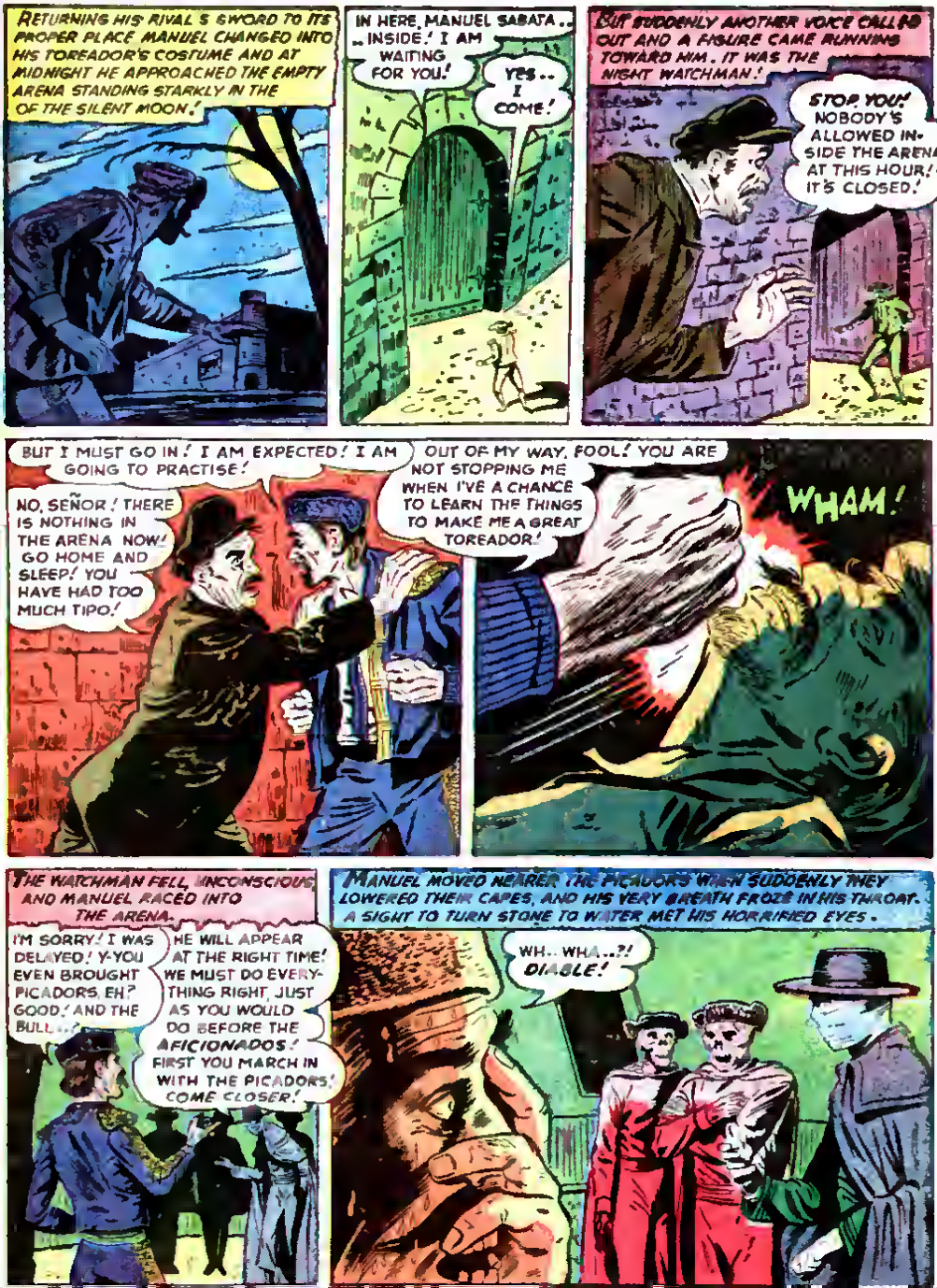
SUDDENLY A FIGURE STEPPED FROM THE DEEP SHADOWS AND MANUEL STARTED BACK IN FRIGHT. THE FIGURE SPOKE AND MANUEL DARED TO BREATHE AGAIN AS HE SAW THE WHITE OF THE BANDAGES IN THE MOONLIGHT!





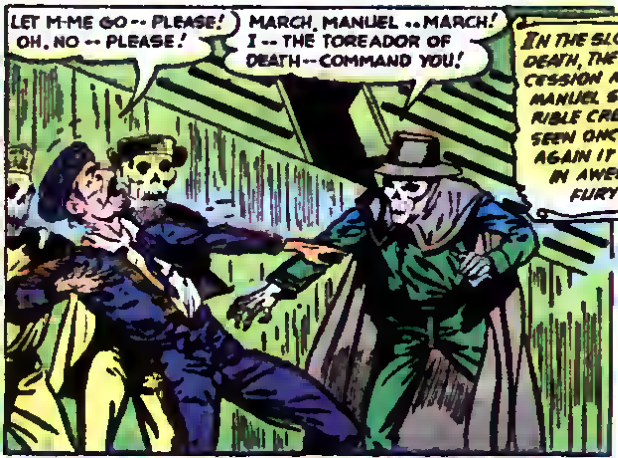
BUT THE EYES GLITTERED THROUGH THE BANDAGES TO HOLD MANUEL IN A GRIP OF EVIL FASCINATION. THE STRANGE OLD FELLOW HAD ONCE BEFORE SPOKEN WORDS OF HELP. PERHAPS HE HAD MORE TO TEACH!



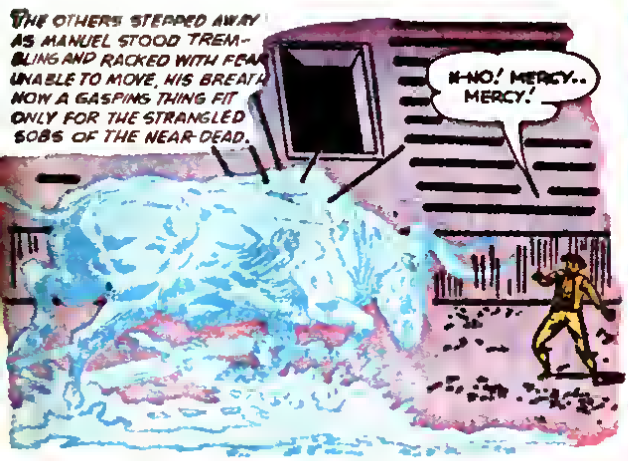

RETURNING HIS RIVAL'S SWORD TO ITS PROPER PLACE MANUEL CHANGED INTO HIS TOREADOR'S COSTUME AND AT MIDNIGHT HE APPROACHED THE EMPTY ARENA STANDING STARKLY IN THE OF THE SILENT MOON.
IN HERE, MANUEL SABATA.. ..INSIDE.' I AM WAITING FOR YOU!
YES.. I COME.'
BUT SUDDENLY ANOTHER VOICE CALLED OUT AND A FIGURE CAME RUNNING TOWARD HIM. IT WAS THE NIGHT WATCHMAN.'
STOP, YOU! NOBODY'S ALLOWED INSIDE THE ARENA AT THIS HOUR! IT'S CLOSED!
BUT I MUST GO IN.' I AM EXPECTED.' I AM GOING TO PRACTISE.'
NO, SEÑOR.' THERE IS NOTHING IN THE ARENA NOW! GO HOME AND SLEEP.' YOU HAVE HAD TOO MUCH TIPO.'
OUT OF MY WAY, FOOL.' YOU ARE NOT STOPPING ME WHEN I'VE A CHANCE TO LEARN THE THINGS TO MAKE ME A GREAT TOREADOR.'
WHAM!
THE WATCHMAN FELL, UNCONSCIOUS, AND MANUEL RACED INTO THE ARENA.
I'M SORRY.' I WAS DELAYED.' Y-YOU EVEN BROUGHT PICADORS, EH? GOOD.' AND THE BULL..?
HE WILL APPEAR AT THE RIGHT TIME! WE MUST DO EVERYTHING RIGHT, JUST AS YOU WOULD DO BEFORE THE AFICIONADOS.' FIRST YOU MARCH IN WITH THE PICADORS.' COME CLOSER.'
MANUEL MOVED NEARER. THE PICADORS WISH SUDDENLY THEY LOWERED THEIR CAPES, AND HIS VERY BREATH FROZE IN HIS THROAT. A SIGHT TO TURN STONE TO WATER MET HIS HORRIFIED EYES.
WH.. WHA..?! DIABLE!

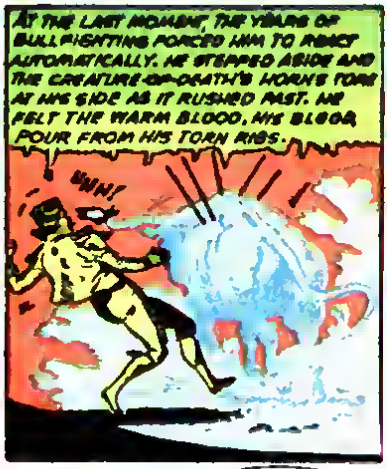
THEN WITH A SWIRL OF HIS HAND, THE FIGURE CAST OFF THE LAST OF HIS BANDAGES! MANUEL SABATA COULD ONLY STAND IN FROZEN SHOCK, HIS BLOOD CRAWLING IN AWE-STRUCK FRIGHT!

MANUEL HAD STUMBLED HARDLY A STEP WHEN ICY FINGERS GRIPPED HIS ARMS! FLESHLESS HANDS NO MORTAL GRIP COULD BREAK DRAGGED HIM BACKWARDS. HELPLESS WITH FEAR, EVEN HIS SCREAMS DIED IN HIS PARALYZED THROAT!



IN THE SLOW CADENCE OF DEATH, THE GHOULISH PROCESSION MARCHED. THEN MANUEL SAW IT -- THE TERRIBLE CREATURE HE HAD SEEN ONCE BEFORE! ONCE AGAIN IT CHARGED AT HIM IN AWESOME FURY!

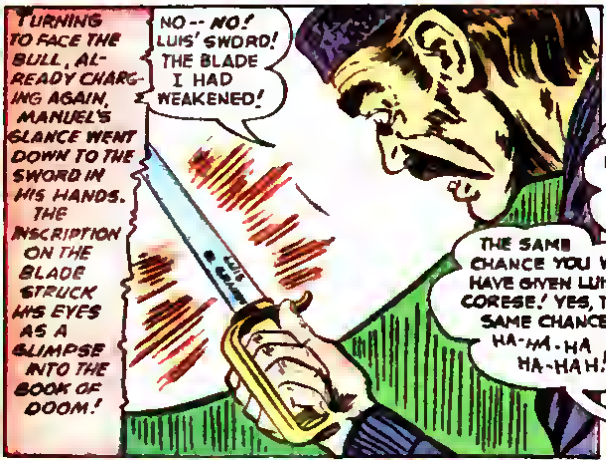

THE OTHERS STEPPED AWAY AS MANUEL STOOD TREMBLING AND RACKED WITH FEAR UNABLE TO MOVE, HIS BREATH NOW A GASPING THING FIT ONLY FOR THE STRANGLED SOBS OF THE NEAR-DEAD.
N-NO! MERCY.. MERCY!


AT THE LAST MOMENT, THE YEARS OF BULL FIGHTING FORCED HIM TO REACT AUTOMATICALLY. HE STEPPED ASIDE AND THE CREATURE-OF-DEATH'S HORNS TORE AT HIS SIDE AS IT RUSHED PAST. HE FELT THE WARM BLOOD, HIS BLOOD, POUR FROM HIS TORN RIBS.
UHH!

EL TORO WILL TURN TO-- (GASP) -- CHARGE AGAIN! I--I CANNOT AVOID THE NEXT!
YOU CALLED ON DEATH, MANUEL SABATA, AND NOW DEATH HAS ANSWERED!

GIVE ME A SWORD-- (SOB) -- A SWORD, I PRAY YOU! GIVE ME A CHANCE FOR MY LIFE.. A SWORD... (SOB)!

ALL RIGHT, YOU SHALL HAVE A SWORD!
YES--YES, GIVE IT HERE--GIVE IT TO ME! -- QUICKLY!


TURNING TO FACE THE BULL, ALREADY CHARGING AGAIN, MANUEL'S GLANCE WENT DOWN TO THE SWORD IN HIS HANDS. THE INSCRIPTION ON THE BLADE STRUCK HIS EYES AS A GLIMPSE INTO THE BOOK OF DOOM!
NO -- NO! LUIS' SWORD! THE BLADE I HAD WEAKENED!
LUIS DE GRANADA
THE SAME CHANCE YOU WOULD HAVE GIVEN LUIS SAN CORESE! YES, THE SAME CHANCE -- HA-HA-HA HA-HAH!
BUT THIS BLADE WILL BREAK! I-I HAVE NO CHANCE WITH THIS!

EL TORO CHARGES, MANUEL SABATA! BETTER USE THE SWORD!
WITH FEAR-DRIVEN DESPERATION, MANUEL DROVE THE SWORD AT THE AWESOME CREATURE BEFORE HIM. A SMUDGED HALF-CRY ESCAPED HIM AS THE BLADE SHATTERED! THE HANDS OF THE DOOMED WERE REACHING FOR HIM!
UUUUUH!
CRACK
AAAAAIII!
MANUEL SABATA'S BODY LANDED IN A GROTESQUE HEAP AND SUDDENLY THE LIFELESS FORM WAS ALONE IN THE ARENA WITH ONLY THE PALE MOON A SILENT WITNESS. IN A FEW MOMENTS, FOOTSTEPS CLATTERED AND...
IS THAT HIM, WATCHMAN? OVER THERE! --- SEE!
YES, OFFICER! THAT IS THE ONE WHO HIT ME!
YES, THERE IS MUCH BEYOND THE UNDERSTANDING OF MORTAL MAN, BUT THE EVER-PRESENT, EVER-WATCHFUL EYES OF ANOTHER WORLD UNDERSTAND THAT TO CALL ON DEATH IS TO SIGN ONE'S OWN NAME IN THE LEDGER OF THE LIFELESS!
BUT HE IS DEAD... GORED BY A BULL! LOOK THERE, THE WOUND IS UNMISTAKABLE!
BUT THERE IS NO BULL HERE! YET IT IS THE WOUND OF EL TORO'S HORN! THIS IS BEYOND UNDERSTANDING --- BEYOND UNDERSTANDING!

CURSE OF THE SEAL MEN

By Richard Kraus

SLOWLY, cautiously, the powerful motor launch nosed its way through the scattered ice floes that littered the steel-gray waters of the Arctic borderland Suddenly, at the bow, Pierre Manet thrust up a thick-mittened hand, in urgent command.

"Stop!" he commanded hoarsely. "Throttle down, Carson. I think there's a herd up ahead—past that big 'berg! I can hear them talking to each othar . . ."

Jim Carson, at the helm, grunted viciously, ". . . and they'll soon hear the bark of *this!*" He loosened a heavy automatic Winchester that was slung around his shoulder. More quietly now, the motor launch crept ahead, waves slapping against its sida. Then, as it passed a giant iceberg that rose above the smaller floes like an oak above scrub pine, the two whita hunters saw their prey ahead—a herd of Arctic seals, swimming in the cold water and disporting themselves on a wide, shallow floe. They'd been searching for days for this herd . . . and now they had it! Both Carson and Pierre Manet hunched forward, rifles ready, as the launch drifted toward the herd.

"Now!" husked big Carson. "Blast 'em!"

Both men sighted and fired, the accurate lead of their powerful Winchesters slashing toward the helpless herd! Two seals were cut down on the floe itself, before they could dive into tha ocean. Then Piarra Manat and Jim Carson directed their deadly fira toward tha animals that wera attempting to swim away. Each time a sleek, brown water creature lifted its whisker-fringed nose abova the sea surface, they fired instently at it! Soma of the seals wera killed—others merely wounded. Their eddying blood began to dye tha water a crimson hue!

Suddenly, as the slaughter continued, Manet and Carson were surprised to sea a parka-clad Eskimo paddling rapidly toward tham in a kayak, from behind the big iceberg they had passed earlier.

His swarthy face suffused with anger, the Eskimo approached the side of their launch. Now he began to shake a wide-bladed spear, shouting vehemently, "Stop! Stop! You must not kill seals! You kill them just for skins, and throw carcass away! My people need them for skin, meat, blubber—all parts! My peopla will starva, if you keep this up!"

"Bah! Clear off in that blamed kayak!" Jim Carson shouted impatiently at tha Eskimo who was now alongside. "Keep clear—or you're liable to get hit yourself!"

But the fury of the Northman was redoubled. Brandishing his spear, ha began to clamber onto the deck of tha launch.

"You not stop—I *make* you stop," he threatened, crouching and drawing the spear back.

Carson lifted his Winchester. "All right, Mister! You asked for this," he grunted. Pierra Manet clutched at his arm, trying to stop him, but the big seal hunter pulled the trigger once—twice! Clutching at his chest, the Eskimo fell forward. Blood bubbled at his lips and sprayed from his fur-enclosed chest, splattering on the leggings of Pierra Manet who was closest to him. His eyes beginning to glaze, tha Eskimo shook a trembling fist at the white men.

"Devils! Devils you are," he whispered. "And devils you will die! I—I wish the cursa . . ." He began to cough in e tremendous spasm, his lifeblood now covering Manet's leggings. ". . . I wish the curse of Akimah on you . . ."

With thesa finsl balf-heard words, ha lurched backward, tumbling from the deck of the motor launch and disappearing from sight in the Arctic depths! With his words, tha skies suddenly blackened, and it was as if tha grip of a mighty hand encompassed the surface of the sea and began to congeal

it in a remorseless spell. Pierre Manet stared, hypnotized, at the blood on his leggings, his jaw hanging slack, his eyes bulging . . .

"What's the matter with you?" Jim Carson grunted. "I had to teach the interfering fool a lesson, didn't I? Now let's get to picking up these seal carcasses before we lose them all!" He looked worriedly up at the leaden skies "Or before we get frozen in here for good! Looks as if the thermometer dropped thirty degrees right there!"

But Pierre did not move. He stared at the blood on the deck and on his leggings, and he muttered monotonously, "The curse of Akimah! The curse . . . of Akimah . . ."

"So what!" laughed Carson contemptuously! "I was the one who shot him! If the fool could whistle up any curse at all—it'd hit me!"

Pierre Manet shook his head hopelessly.

"You don't understand," he said. "His blood touched me—and the curse will afflict me! I—I'm turning into . . . into . . ."

"Into *what?*" Carson asked impatiently.

Then, even as Jim Carson watched incredulously, he realized what was happening! Pierre Manet's shape was changing—he was growing shorter and more squat! His hair, instead of black and curly, was turning brown and straight, and it grew swiftly, in a short, glossy length, over his body! Soon it covered his face and hands, until he was everywhere furred! And then, as Carson gasped in horror at what was happening before his very eyes, Manet's face changed. It was long and pointed, with a black-muzzled nose, and with fringed whiskers on each side. His eyes were dark and cunning! And his arms—were flippers! Barking excitedly, the seal that was Manet sprang up and down on the deck as Jim Carson, terrified, backed away . . .

"The curse . . . of Akimah," he muttered. "It hit *him*, not *me*, because he was touched by the Eskimo's blood!"

Suddenly the seal hunter flung back his head and bowled with maniacal laughter. His eyes crinkled with cleverness and happy triumph.

"Then it'll all be mine," he shouted. "The pelts we've taken so far—and those we shot today. I won't have to split with any partner. In fact, Manet, to me you're just another pelt!" Snatching up his Winchester, Carson fired point blank at the seal that squatted before him on the motor launch. A single shiver, and the animal lay before him, stilled forever.

Carson laughed again, the sound echoing mournfully over the Arctic waters, passing from floe to floe.

"And I'll start by taking *your* pelt, Pierre," he chuckled, drawing his sharp skinning knife.

Kneeling by the side of the dead seal, he plunged the keen-edged blade into the glossy side of the animal. As he did so, and as the still warm blood gushed out over his hand, Carson was shaken by a spasm of fear! At once, as in a dream, he recalled that he had once heard a breed tell of the curse of Akimah, many years before. "It's passed on, from victim to victim," the old trapper had said. "First one is killed, and then another. Whoever the blood touches—*he* turns into a . . ."

Springing backward in a frenzy of despair, Jim Carson tried desperately to wipe the fatal blood from his hands on his furry outer-garments.

BUT even as he stared down at his hands, he saw that the fingers were disappearing, and that the wrists, and the back of his hands were being covered with fine, soft hair! Frantically, he touched his head. It was different! It was longer, pointed . . . seal-like! He had hands and fingers no longer—but a seal's short, stumplike flippers!

And somehow, Jim Carson realized that it should be so.

Barking excitedly, he wriggled toward the edge of the launch. He slid off the boat into the freezing water. It was his home . . .

THE END

WHAT IS REAL---AND WHAT IS UNREAL? CAREFUL, BEFORE YOU ANSWER! IS A GHOST, FOR INSTANCE, UNREAL BECAUSE IT CANNOT BE SEEN OR FELT? THEN WHAT ABOUT AIR, WHICH ALSO CANNOT BE SEEN OR TAKEN BETWEEN THE FINGERS? AND THOUGHTS---WHO CAN HOLD THEM UP AND PROVE THEY ARE REAL? YET THOUGHTS **ARE** REAL...AS PETER AKROYD FOUND OUT WHEN HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THE GHASTLY REALITY OF.....

The GRIM UNREALITY

YOU'RE ONLY A FIGMENT OF MY IMAGINATION! YOU'RE UNREAL, I SAY--- **UNREAL!**

NO, PETER AKROYD, I AM REAL! AND I AM COMING OUT--- **ARRRRRR!**

A STORM LASHED ACROSS THE BAY WITH INSANE FURY, HURLING WAVES AGAINST THE ROCKBOUND SHORES OF THE SMALL ISLAND ON WHICH STOOD A RAMBLING OLD MANSION! WINDS HOWLED AND SCREECHED LIKE MADDENED DEMONS, AND RAIN BEAT A TATTOO ON THE WINDOWS OF THE OLD MANSION!

WITHIN THE LONELY OLD HOUSE, PETER AKROYD ADDRESSED HIS WEEK END GUESTS, ALREADY NERVOUS AND JITTERY, IN TONES OF OMINOUS FOREBODING!

LISTEN! IS THAT JUST THE WIND WAILING? OR IS IT THE HOWLING OF KARZZ, THE DEVIL-DEMON, SEEKING TO CLAW HIS WAY IN FOR HIS HUMAN VICTIMS?

OOOOOOOOOO!

KARZZ? DEVIL-DEMON? WHAT SILLY OLD LEGEND IS THAT, PETER?

ACCORDING TO OLD RECORDS IN THIS HOUSE, KARZZ DRAGGED OFF MANY A SCREAMING VICTIM TO HIS LAIR! I MADE A PAINTING OF THE FRIGHTFUL FIEND, FROM THE DATA!

AND THEN, AS AKROYD SNAPPED ON A LIGHT, LIVID HORROR SPRANG FORTH IN LURID COLORING, SHOCKING THE EYES OF THE UNPREPARED GUESTS!

BEHOLD! THIS IS KARZZ!

GREAT HEAVENS!

NERVES ALREADY UNSTRUNG BY THE RAGING STORM OUTSIDE, ONE OF THE GUESTS SUCCUMBED TO THE PAINTING'S MACABRE MENACE!

OHHHH!

STELLA DOWLING FAINTED!

OH, I'M SORRY! I GUESS I CARRIED MY LITTLE FARCE TOO FAR!

FORGIVE ME, STELLA! YES, IT'S ONLY A SILLY LEGEND! IT SEEMED SUCH AN IDEAL NIGHT TO TELL A STORY OF HORROR! I WAS ONLY TRYING TO ENTERTAIN YOU ALL WITH A FEW THRILLS AND CHILLS!

THEN I WAS THE SILLY ONE, PETER, TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY! I'M ALL RIGHT NOW!

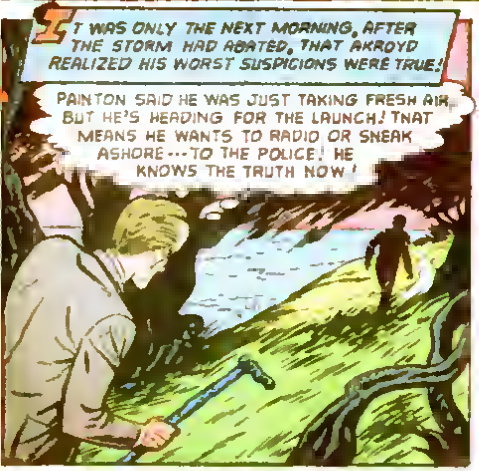
ODD, NOW PEOPLE FALL FOR IT EVERY TIME! I MADE UP THE STORY IN MY OWN MIND, JUST TO STARTLE GUESTS, AND I ALMOST HAD THEM BELIEVING IT! THEY WERE READY TO BOLT IN FRIGHT! HOW AMUSING!

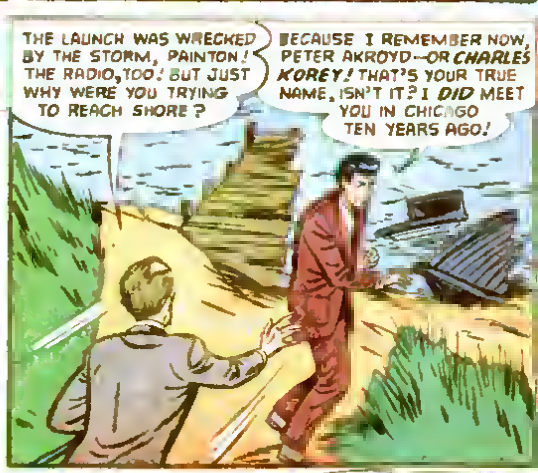
BUT AS THE EVENING WORE AWAY IN LIGHTER PURSUITS, A PANG OF FEAR CAME ALSO TO PETER'S HEART!

CARL PAINTON HAS BEEN STARING AT ME ALL EVENING! WHY? I NEVER MET HIM BEFORE TODAY! STELLA BROUGHT HIM ALONG!

PARDON ME, AKROYD! SOMEHOW YOU SEEM FAMILIAR, AS IF I'D SEEN YOU YEARS AGO! DID YOU EVER LIVE IN CHICAGO?
CHICAGO!? NEVER, I ASSURE YOU! YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN!

BUT AKROYD WAS LYING! AND NOW OVERWHELMING MEMORIES OF A DARK PAST FLOODED OVER HIM!
CHICAGO! DOES HE SUSPECT? DOES HE KNOW MY SECRET? AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, AM I IN DANGER? I'LL HAVE TO KEEP A SHARP EYE ON PAINTON FROM NOW ON!


IT WAS ONLY THE NEXT MORNING, AFTER THE STORM HAD ABATED, THAT AKROYD REALIZED HIS WORST SUSPICIONS WERE TRUE!
PAINTON SAID HE WAS JUST TAKING FRESH AIR, BUT HE'S HEADING FOR THE LAUNCH! THAT MEANS HE WANTS TO RADIO OR SNEAK ASHORE---TO THE POLICE! HE KNOWS THE TRUTH NOW!


THE LAUNCH WAS WRECKED BY THE STORM, PAINTON! THE RADIO, TOO! BUT JUST WHY WERE YOU TRYING TO REACH SHORE?
BECAUSE I REMEMBER NOW, PETER AKROYD--OR CHARLES KOREY! THAT'S YOUR TRUE NAME, ISN'T IT? I DID MEET YOU IN CHICAGO TEN YEARS AGO!

YOU EMBEZZLED A FORTUNE THERE, SKIPPED TOWN AND TOOK UP A SECLUDED LIFE ON THIS PRIVATE ISLAND ESTATE! YOUR GAME'S UP, KOREY! NATURALLY, THE POLICE WILL HEAR OF THIS!
THAT IS WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, PAINTON!

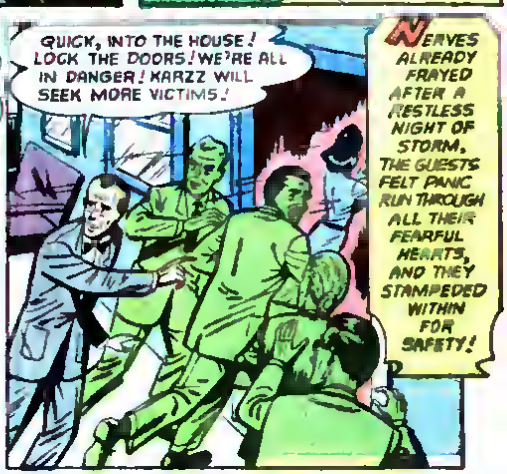
BECAUSE THIS SEALS YOUR LIPS!
THUD!
AHHHH!

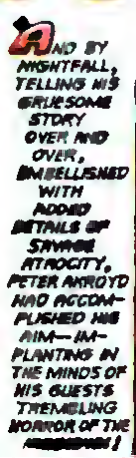
I HAD TO KILL HIM! I HAD TO! I COULDN'T HAVE THIS WHOLE THING BLOW UP IN MY FACE! THERE GOES HIS BODY TO THE BOTTOM! MY PAST CRIME IS SAFE! BUT HOW CAN I COVER UP THIS CRIME---MURDER? HOW?

THEN HIS FEAR-CRAZED THOUGHTS CENTERED ON A SOLUTION TO HIS DILEMMA...A SOLUTION THAT WAS FANTASTIC--YET MADLY POSSIBLE!
HOW CAN I EXPLAIN AWAY PAINTON'S DISAPPEARANCE TO THE OTHERS? AH--THE LEGEND--KARZZ! IT'S JUST CRAZY ENOUGH TO WORK! THEY ALMOST BELIEVED IN HIM BEFORE! NOW THEY REALLY WILL!

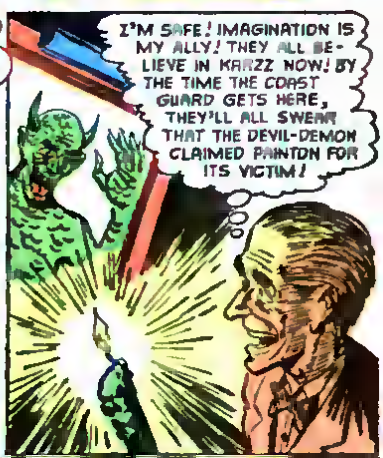
PETER! WHAT'S HE YELLING? WHAT FRIGHTENED HIM?
EEAAA! KARZZ! KARZZ! HE--HE DRAGGED PAINTON OFF!

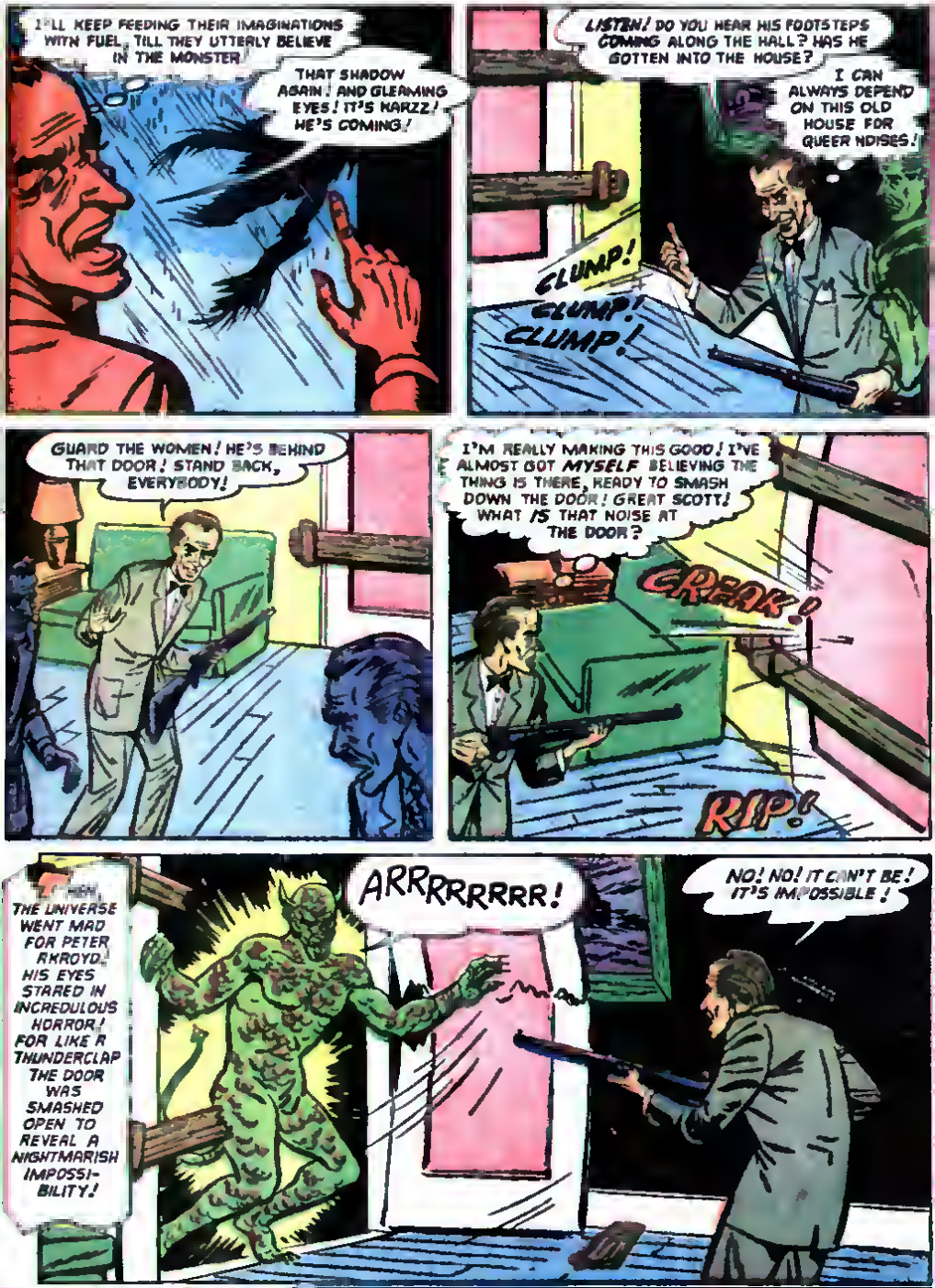
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, MAN? KARZZ IS JUST A LEGEND!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, TOO! BUT HE'S REAL--HORRIBLY REAL! I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES, AS HE SEIZED PAINTON IN HIS RIPPING TALONS AND DRAGGED HIM OFF! IT WAS HORRIBLE!


QUICK, INTO THE HOUSE! LOCK THE DOORS! WE'RE ALL IN DANGER! KARZZ WILL SEEK MORE VICTIMS!
NERVES ALREADY FRAYED AFTER A RESTLESS NIGHT OF STORM, THE GUESTS FELT PANIC RUN THROUGH ALL THEIR FEARFUL HEARTS, AND THEY STAMPEDED WITHIN FOR SAFETY!

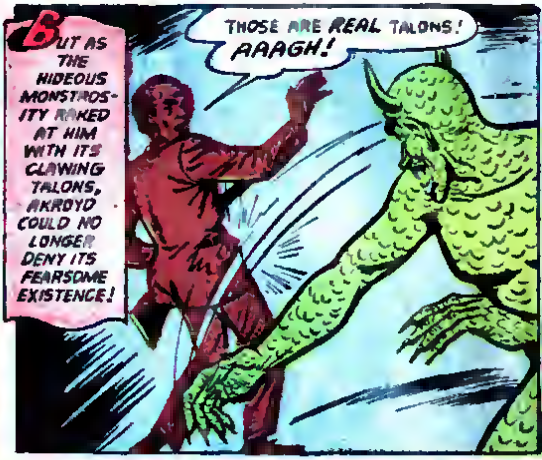

AND BY NIGHTFALL, TELLING HIS GRUESOME STORY OVER AND OVER, EMBELLISHED WITH ADDED DETAILS OF SAVAGE ATROCITY, PETER AKROYD HAD ACCOMPLISHED HIS AIM--IMPLANTING IN THE MINDS OF HIS GUESTS TREMBLING HORROR OF THE

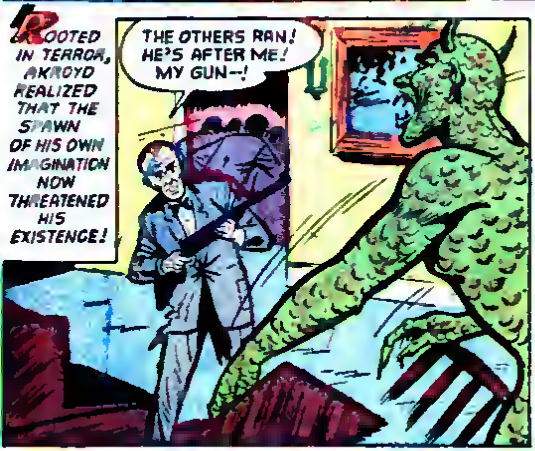
KEEP GUARD, MEN! WITH THE LAUNCH AND THE RADIO WRECKED, WE'RE STUCK HERE TILL THE COAST GUARD MAKES THE ROUNDS OF THE STORM AREA! WATCH FOR KARZZ!
THAT SHADOW OUT THERE... GLUTCHING HANDS ...IT'S KARZZ TRYING TO GET IN!


I'M SAFE! IMAGINATION IS MY ALLY! THEY ALL BELIEVE IN KARZZ NOW! BY THE TIME THE COAST GUARD GETS HERE, THEY'LL ALL SWEAR THAT THE DEVIL-DEMON CLAIMED PAINTON FOR ITS VICTIM!


I'LL KEEP FEEDING THEIR IMAGINATIONS WITH FUEL, TILL THEY UTTERLY BELIEVE IN THE MONSTER!
THAT SHADOW AGAIN! AND GLEAMING EYES! IT'S KARZZ! HE'S COMING!
LISTEN! DO YOU HEAR HIS FOOTSTEPS COMING ALONG THE HALL? HAS HE GOTTEN INTO THE HOUSE?
I CAN ALWAYS DEPEND ON THIS OLD HOUSE FOR QUEER NOISES!
CLUMP!
CLUMP!
CLUMP!
GUARD THE WOMEN! HE'S BEHIND THAT DOOR! STAND BACK, EVERYBODY!
I'M REALLY MAKING THIS GOOD! I'VE ALMOST GOT MYSELF BELIEVING THE THING IS THERE, READY TO SMASH DOWN THE DOOR! GREAT SCOTT! WHAT IS THAT NOISE AT THE DOOR?
CREAK!
RIP!
THE UNIVERSE WENT MAD FOR PETER RKROYD. HIS EYES STARED IN INCREDULOUS HORROR! FOR LIKE A THUNDERCLAP THE DOOR WAS SMASHED OPEN TO REVEAL A NIGHTMARISH IMPOSSIBILITY!
ARRRRRRRR!
NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

ARRRRR!
THIS IS SHEER MADNESS! I MADE THE DEMON UP OUT OF MY OWN MIND! HE CAN'T EXIST--HE CAN'T! HE'S ONLY A FIGMENT OF MY IMAGINATION!


BUT AS THE HIDEOUS MONSTROSITY RAKED AT HIM WITH ITS CLAWING TALONS, AKROYD COULD NO LONGER DENY ITS FEARSOME EXISTENCE!
THOSE ARE REAL TALONS! AAAGH!

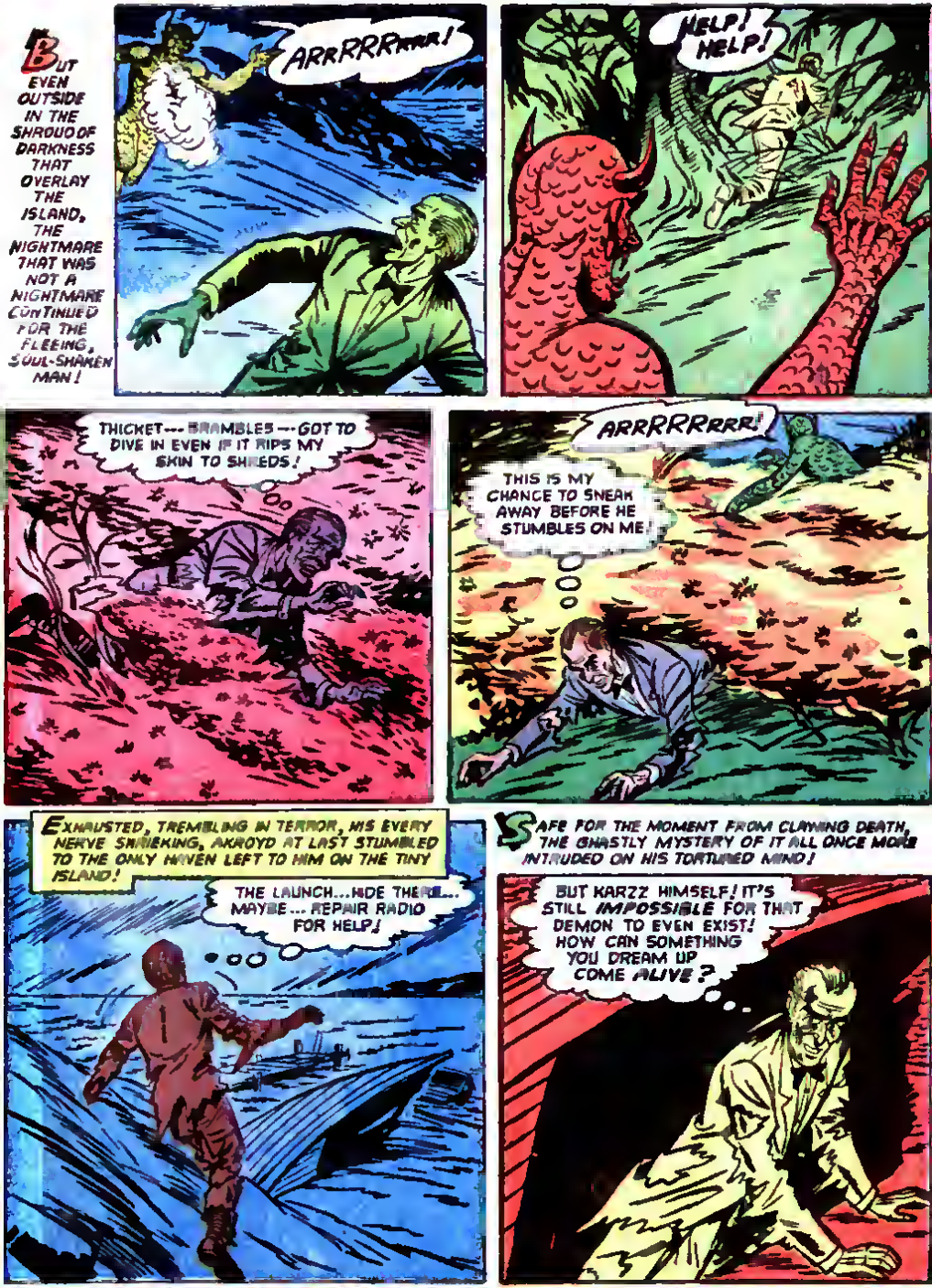

ROOTED IN TERROR, AKROYD REALIZED THAT THE SPAWN OF HIS OWN IMAGINATION NOW THREATENED HIS EXISTENCE!
THE OTHERS RAN! HE'S AFTER ME! MY GUN--!

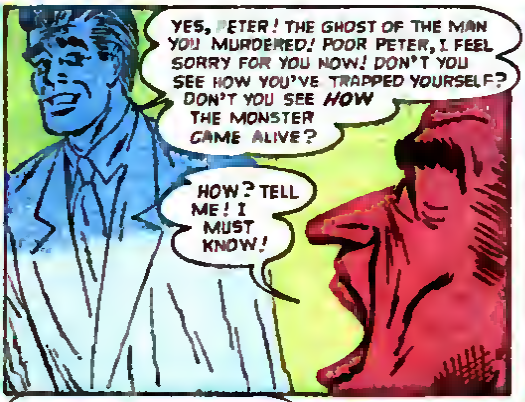
BANG! BANG!
GREAT HEAVENS! NO EFFECT ON THAT SCALY HIDE!

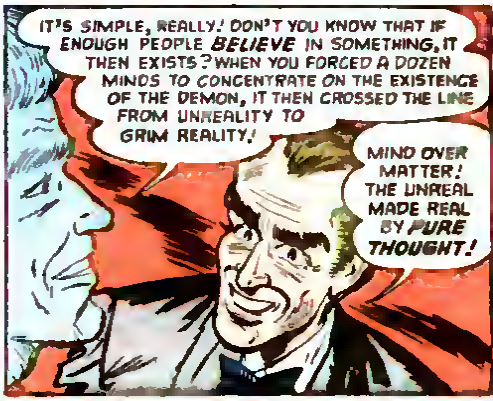
HOW CAN I ESCAPE? WHERE CAN I HIDE? THE BASEMENT...
ARRRRRRR!

BUT THERE WAS NO HIDING FOR AKROYD IN THE DISMAL DARKNESS OF THE BASEMENT, FOR WITH HALF-ANIMAL CUNNING THE MONSTER ROUTED HIM OUT OF CONCEALMENT!
GOT TO GET OUTSIDE... IN THE DARK... MY ONLY CHANCE!
ARRRRR!

JUST IN TIME!


But even outside in the shroud of darkness that overlay the island, the nightmare that was not a nightmare continued for the fleeing, soul-shaken man!
ARRRRRrrrr!
HELP! HELP!
THICKET--- BRAMBLES --- GOT TO DIVE IN EVEN IF IT RIPS MY SKIN TO SHREDS!
ARRRRRRRR!
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO SNEAK AWAY BEFORE HE STUMBLES ON ME!
Exhausted, trembling in terror, his every nerve shrieking, Akroyd at last stumbled to the only haven left to him on the tiny island!
THE LAUNCH...HIDE THERE... MAYBE... REPAIR RADIO FOR HELP!
Safe for the moment from clawing death, the ghastly mystery of it all once more intruded on his tortured mind!
BUT KARZZ HIMSELF! IT'S STILL IMPOSSIBLE FOR THAT DEMON TO EVEN EXIST! HOW CAN SOMETHING YOU DREAM UP COME ALIVE?

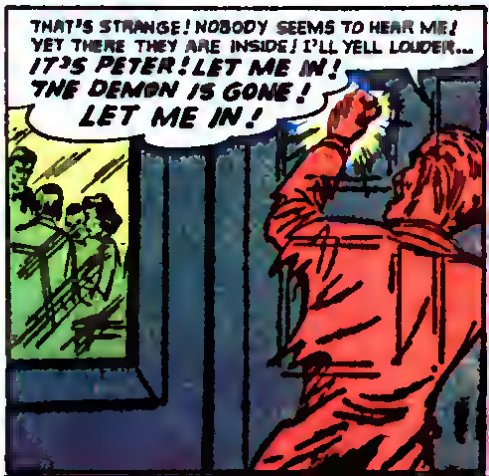


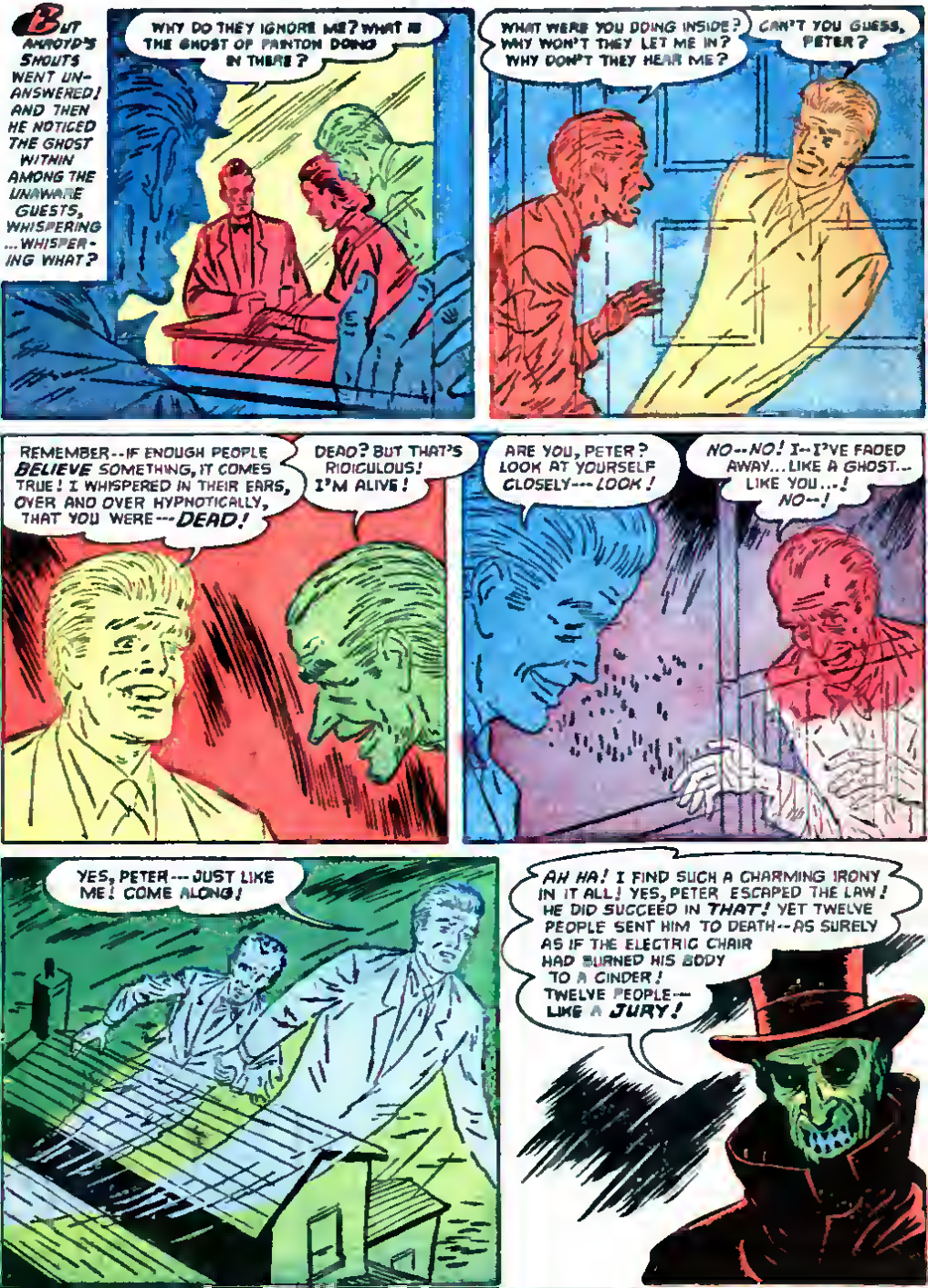


THE DEVILISH MONSTROSITY ONCE MORE LURCHED TO SEIZE ITS HELPLESS VICTIM! BUT AT THAT MOMENT, AKROYD'S MADDENED MIND SPUN TOWARD A WEIRD SALVATION FOR HIMSELF!

TRIUMPHANTLY SAFE FROM THE VANISHED MONSTER, THE KILLER RAVED ON, GLOATING AT HOW WHAT WAS PURE HORROR FOR HIM BEFORE HAD NOW BECOME A BLESSING IN DISGUISE!

AKROYD RETURNED TO THE HOUSE, ONCE MORE CALM AND COOL, READY TO CARRY ON HIS ORIGINAL PLAN TO ESCAPE THE VENGEANCE OF THE LAW!




But Amboyd's shouts went unanswered! And then he noticed the ghost within among the unaware guests, whispering ...whispering what?
WHY DO THEY IGNORE ME? WHAT IS THE GHOST OF PAINTON DOING IN THERE?
WHAT WERE YOU DOING INSIDE? WHY WON'T THEY LET ME IN? WHY DON'T THEY HEAR ME?
CAN'T YOU GUESS, PETER?
REMEMBER--IF ENOUGH PEOPLE BELIEVE SOMETHING, IT COMES TRUE! I WHISPERED IN THEIR EARS, OVER AND OVER HYPNOTICALLY, THAT YOU WERE---DEAD!
DEAD? BUT THAT'S RIDICULOUS! I'M ALIVE!
ARE YOU, PETER? LOOK AT YOURSELF CLOSELY---LOOK!
NO--NO! I--I'VE FADED AWAY... LIKE A GHOST... LIKE YOU...! NO--!
YES, PETER--- JUST LIKE ME! COME ALONG!
AH HA! I FIND SUCH A CHARMING IRONY IN IT ALL! YES, PETER ESCAPED THE LAW! HE DID SUCCEED IN THAT! YET TWELVE PEOPLE SENT HIM TO DEATH--AS SURELY AS IF THE ELECTRIC CHAIR HAD BURNED HIS BODY TO A CINDER! TWELVE PEOPLE--- LIKE A JURY!

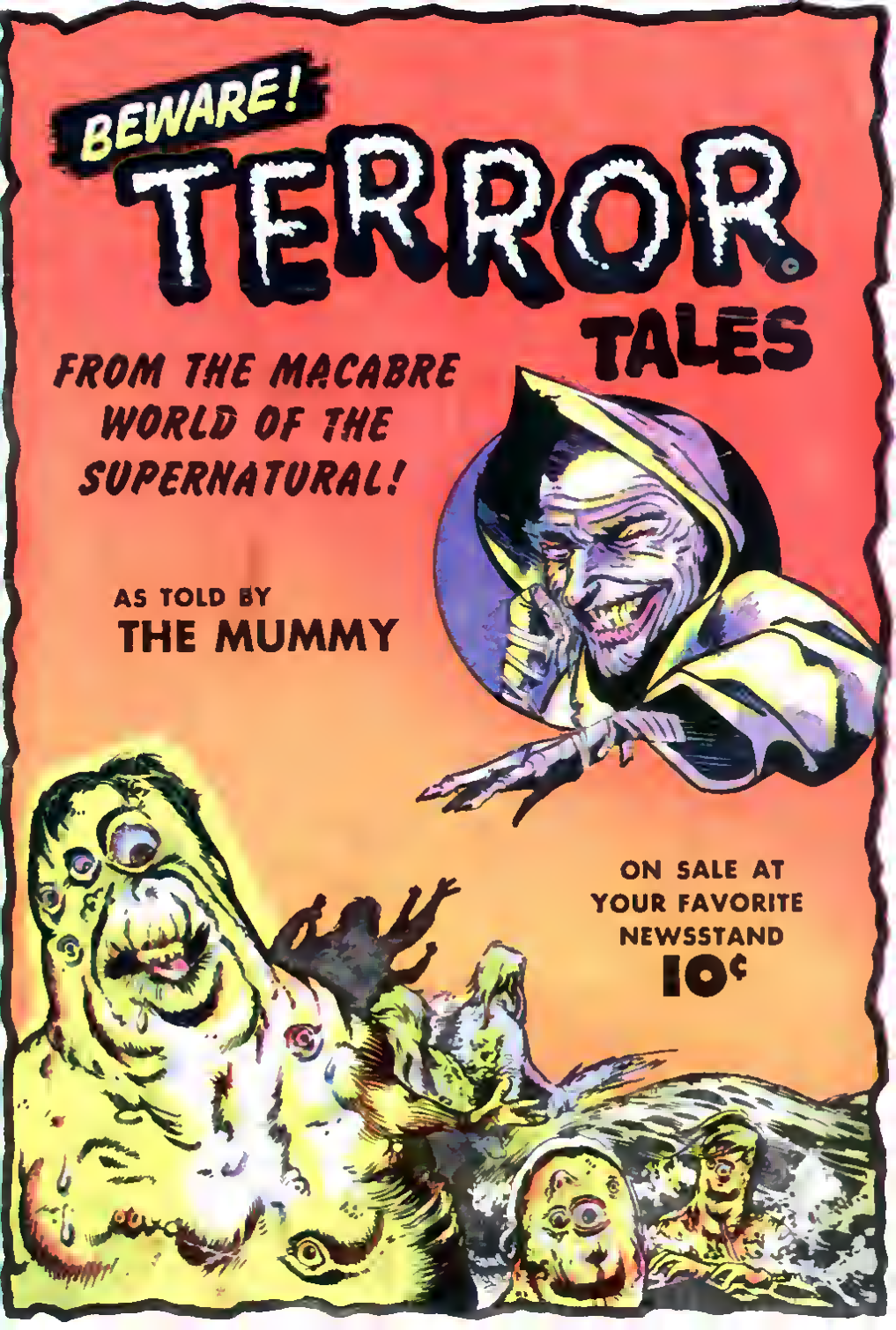
INCREDIBLE—

PULSE-POUNDING STORIES OF STRANGE SUSPENSE!

STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES

ON SALE AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND

10¢


BEWARE!
TERROR
TALES
FROM THE MACABRE WORLD OF THE SUPERNATURAL!
AS TOLD BY
THE MUMMY
ON SALE AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND
10¢